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THE LOST CORONET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"One Sparkle of Gold," "Evelyn's Plot," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XX

Though when I loved thee thou wert fair,
Thou art no longer so;
Those glories all the pride they wear,
Unto opinion we

Beauties, like stars, in borrowed lustre shine,
And 'twas my love that gave thee thine.

"WALTER, you are late; I have been waiting for you at least ten minutes. I do not understand such insolence when I risk so much to benefit you," said Estelle, impatiently, advancing to meet the stealthily approaching figure that glided and wended its tortuous way through the narrow alleys of the thick wood.

"Well, fair countess, that may be a matter of opinion," he returned, carelessly. "In the first place I consider that you are benefiting yourself far more than me by the little favour you are doing. You would not care for it to be proclaimed in a public court that a young fellow brought up for debt, and we need not say any other little peccadilloes, was the lover, suitor, affianced husband of the Countess of Mont Sorell."

"You dare not!" half shrieked the girl, impetuously. "You dare not assert such atrocious falsehoods. It would be madness, scouted by all whose opinion I could value as worth a thought."

"This to me, bold, shameless girl!" exclaimed the young man, indignantly, "to me, who hold your fame, your whole future in my power. I thought all this folly and madness was settled at our last meeting. Time is too short now for us to repon the subject."

The proud girl cast herself on her very knees before him in that damp, leafy path, regardless of the stain to her rich garments which might perchance foreshadow the threatened shade on her good name.

"Walter, Walter, you cannot be so cruel. You do not love me now, or you would scarcely insult and

torture me so cruelly. But, if you ever did love me, I implore, I entreat, I pray for your mercy. I will purchase it at any price. Give me that book, promise me to keep silence on the past, and you shall never repent your concession. Name the sum you will demand, and if it is in reason, in my power to grant, you shall have it as freely as the cheque I have brought you now. Would it not be better than this miserable, reckless, Bohemian life, and wild, impossible hopes?"

He laughed with a scornful ring, that spoke his reply better than words.

"Foolish Estelle. As if I had not got the game in my own hands," he returned, carelessly. "Yes, it is an amusing sport, I promise you. Why, even now some young springald was dogging your steps, I suppose, for men of his stamp seldom care to see the sun rise unless some star attends its orbit."

"Doggling my steps! Who—what was he like?" gasped Estelle, in terror.

"I neither know nor care, countess of my soul, since it is utterly out of his or any other man's power to snatch my prize from me. It is rather amusing to watch the struggles that I know to be so contemptible. Fortune-hunting scoundrels such as they are deserve richly to be bamboozled; is it not so, Estelle?"

"And yourself among the category," she answered, angrily. "Be so good as to leave my friends in peace, Mr. Fitzwarren, and answer my question. What will buy your silence?"

"Nothing but your hand, Estelle," he replied, coolly. "Harkye, countess; you have said a great many hard things of me, which are very amusing to you, and perfectly harmless to my thinking. But when you come to plain facts and figures it is all very different. Estelle, I was no fortune hunter when we first began to love, when the irretrievable pledge that binds you to me was spoken. You were a simple gentlewoman then, with slender fortune and a name that was scarcely superior to my own. If you have turned my love into hard, cold tyranny, that only smiles at the torture it inflicts, that is your doing, not mine; and you will reap your punishment, power-

less and writhing under the infliction, spite of the rank and wealth that have turned your head. Those who profess to love you shall gradually learn the worthlessness of their idol, or else suffer in their turn when she is claimed by her rightful possessor."

"Walter, it is impossible; you cannot, you dare not!" she exclaimed, passionately. "I would die rather than endure such tyranny. I tell you I will marry never consent; no, not to save my very life, would I marry you—never endure such degradation!"

"Perhaps not," he returned, significantly; "but still I may be your master, proud girl; you may still be all my own. Do you understand me, Countess Estelle?"

She wrung her hands in impotent fury.

"Walter, you are a villain," she cried, impetuously. "I will not bandy words with a lady, or I might retort with an epithet not very distinct from that flattering title," he returned. "However, it matters little to me. Give me the cheque, and remember that I have the means of ascertaining all your movements, and the stern purpose to expose you should any question of marriage arise. You cannot complain after due warning, whatever may be the result."

He held out his hand with a look and gesture that she dared not resist, and she slowly and reluctantly placed the paper in his hand.

"I may need more, Estelle, but you shall have proper notice, and I will not be exorbitant in my demands," he said, "though I might be excused for drawing on my own exchequer."

She stamped her foot impatiently.

"Walter, do not drive me to wish you were dead," she exclaimed, stung to wild fury by his taunts.

"I have no intention of gratifying your obliging desire, fair countess, and have as little fear that you will turn into a Beatrice Cenci where I am concerned," he replied, calmly. "I shall certainly take my own course, perfectly unmoved by your childish ravings. Farewell, sweet countess. Do not be in despair; we shall meet again ere long."

Had Estelle possessed a weapon at the moment her threat might not have been as contemptible as the

young man considered it. Her hands clenched till the blood oozed from under her pink nails, and her eyes flared like burning steel as she replied, haughtily:

"If there is power in justice, strength in hatred, and wit in woman, we will never meet save as bitter foes, Walter Fitzwarren, and you may rue the day when you provoked my implacable, contemptuous vengeance. From this day it is war to the knife between us."

She turned proudly away, without even deigning a look or word to the object of her wrath, and he gazed after her retreating form with a half-speculating, half-regretful air.

"She is very beautiful," he said, "more so than I ever believed she could be, and rich and titled, with all that it would seem man could desire in a bride. Yet, were it not that I am bound, bound by a hundred ties, to carry out this marriage, I would rather wed an humble village girl, innocent, sweet, loving, and good, than this proud, fiend-like countess. Yes, it will be rare sport to baulk and humble and punish her as she deserves, and in that I shall find about the chief amusement of my wedded life."

Placing the cheque carefully in his dress, Walter walked carelessly away, with the sailor gait that had become of late so habitual to him.

Estelle hurried along more occupied perhaps by the hint her unwelcome suitor had given of some lurking eavesdropper than even the memorable interview that had just taken place.

She gazed warily around her at every turn, secure in her own noiseless footsteps, save where some opening might expose her to detection; but still no sound or object roused her quick senses, and as she approached her own park gates she drew a long breath of relief, confident in her own ready wit for excuses even if detected at such an hour wandering in her own domain.

But even as she emerged from the last shelter, and ere it was possible to withdraw without certainty of detection, Quentin Oliphant left the station he had taken up at the gate, and came eagerly towards her.

"Then I was right; I thought my eyes could not deceive me where you were concerned, my Estelle," he said, anxiously. "I have watched all this time lest some danger might overtake you. What could induce you to wander out at such an hour?" he added, suspiciously.

"My own pleasure, my lord. I presume I am not to be accountable to you for my actions," she returned, haughtily.

"Nay, Estelle, that is ungenerous, unkind," he replied. "Can there be true love without jealous watchfulness and alarm? Even now I encountered not far from the gates an ill-looking blackguard, whom I should certainly have ordered off your domain had he been at all nearer to the house. Did you meet him, Estelle?" he exclaimed, suddenly, as the blood impotently tided over her features.

"I should scarcely have troubled myself, eyen to glance at him, from your flattering description," she returned, with affected carelessness. "Some labourer, very likely, going to work."

"He was not of that class, Estelle. He had the look and air—nay, the very dress—of one who might pretend to some sort of gentlemanship. I marked him well, and I should know him at a look wherever I met him."

"You excite my curiosity, Lord Quentin. Surely he must have been very remarkable to excite such interest in your mind," she answered, with a half-scornful laugh.

"Perhaps, Estelle," he returned, coolly, "there is something equally remarkable in your not having met this man. I fancy that you must have taken the same direction where I saw him, and it could not have been long after you went from the gates when the fellow was sauntering impudently towards the wood."

"Do you mean to confess that you have actually presumed to dog my footsteps, and keep a register of the very minute when I choose to leave my own park gates, my lord?" exclaimed the young countess, angrily. "I would not endure such espionage from an acknowledged suitor, scarcely from a husband. You do not love me, Quentin," she added, bitterly, as the prediction of her late companion suddenly occurred to her, "or you could not even dream of such cruel injustice."

"Estelle, my beloved, my beautiful one," he exclaimed, eagerly, "do not mistake me. It is but my jealous love, my worship of your attractions, that makes me judge the very air that touches your cheek, the very beggar who dares to cast his eyes on your loveliness. I could as soon distrust an angel's purity as your queenly pride, my peerless one."

"Yet you did not believe in Pauline; you were easily moved to doubt and to desert her," she returned, looking sharply at his changing face.

"Had I not cause?" he said. "Was it not instinct that made me detect in the low-born usurper of your

rights the ignoble, base blood that flowed in her veins, and made her incapable of high and honourable thoughts and conduct? You first opened my eyes to her mean suspicions of my truth and disinterestedness. It was her own low nature that suggested them; but in you, my beloved, in whom the spirit of a noble race shines out in every look and action, there can be no such question. My peerless betrothed is above reproach or suspicion."

"Nay, Quentin, I do not allow that epithet," she said, gravely. "For months, at least, common decorum and dignity forbid it on my part, and you must endure the ordeal, or renounce all hope of Estelle De Vesci. But," she added, suddenly, "tell me, Quentin, if you did hear evil tongues slander me, attack my conduct, asperse my name—what then?"

"I would choke the slander down their very throats," he said, impulsively.

"If I were to demand any service from you, as a test of your devotion, without perhaps explaining my reasons or my plans, you would shrink back and say true love could not bear mystery," she resumed, half scornfully.

"I would risk my very life—all but honour—at your bidding, Estelle, and only need that you should promise me the guardion of your hand," he replied, firmly.

A triumphant smile crossed her lips.

"It is well, if you speak truly, Lord Quentin, and you would deserve a richer recompence if you displayed such generous trust," she said, turning on him one of her most splendid, dazzling smiles. "It may be that I will test your love and truth some day. I am but a lonely orphan, you know, in spite of my gilded coat."

Her hand was in his, pressed passionately to his lips, and a torrent of tender protestations pouring from his tongue, as the mansion came at length in sight, and she sprang from his side like a stricken deer.

"Lord, Quentin, not a word of this interview as you value my favour," she said, hastily, as she fled across a path that led to a private door leading to her own apartments.

Once there she threw herself in a chair to compose her panting bosom, and summoned her maid.

"I can see light," she murmured, with a look of exulting triumph. "Yes, yes, my doughty suitors may be played off against each other, and the prize vanish from their eyes as they think to catch it as a gullion. Idiots, I understand women in ill as to dare to threaten instead of love! The Countess of Mont Sorrel might well scorn a score of such suitors, and still have a crowd at her feet."

And with a scornful laugh she rang the bell for Theresa.

CHAPTER XI.

It shall be tickle, false, and full of fraud,
The bottom poison, and the top of treasured
With sweets that shall, the sharpest sight beguile;

The strongest body shall make most weak,
Strike the wise dumb, the foolish teach to speak.

"You are late to-night, Jonas," said Esther Farn as the dark, face and worn form of her lodger presented itself at the door, which she had opened almost before his hand could touch the lock.

"Then you shouldn't be sitting up for me," he returned, gloomily. "I neither require nor wish such superstitious attentions. I have a key, that is sufficient."

"You may want more service from me than you imagine, Jonas," she said, bitterly. "A man seldom estimates at its full value a woman's power for good or ill. And, if I mistake not, you are the last who should under-rate or repel any such aid."

"What do you mean, woman? I do not comprehend you," returned the man, clambering with some difficulty the dark, steep stairs, from which she perhaps purposely withheld the light.

"Never mind, you soon will," she observed, coldly, as she followed him with a contemptuous glance at the evidence of excess which his unsteady gait and clinging hold manifested.

When he at length gained the room, and sank down on the nearest seat to the door, she coolly followed him into the apartment and closed the door after her, with an air that too cordially bespoke her determination to remain at her pleasure.

"That will do, Esther. Leave the light and I'll go to bed; I'm tired, old girl," he said, throwing himself back wearily in his chair.

"That's no fault of mine, Jonas, and I don't mean to be balked because you desert your home and best friend for a fine-lady slip of a girl that would ne more have you than she would marry a felon. Mark me, Jonas, a felon!"

"Silence, woman. Don't drive me mad. I'm in no humour for folly. I'll send you out of the room in a way you would not like, if you don't mind," he returned, fiercely. "Be off, I say."

"If I wasn't an idiot, I'd take you at your word,

and leave you to your fate," she said, with a suppressed passion that he was hardly sufficient master of himself to estimate as it deserved. "But, to my own bitter humiliation I care for you, Jonas. Yes, and the more a woman loves the more she can hate, and I'm on the turning-point from one to the other. Who's this white-faced, baby girl you've been after? Answer me that, and tell me how you dared to look at her chit face when you were pledged to another—to me, Jonas Dawes?"

He laughed coarsely.

"Pooh, pooh, old girl; you must know better than that," he replied. "Just look at yourself in the glass and see whether it's likely you would be the choice of a gentleman, or fit to manage his house and mingle with his friends. But don't look so glum, Esther. I won't leave you in the lurch, woman. You shall have a pretty handsome sum to make up for your disappointment and get you out of this queer place. I should not wonder if, after all, you found someone ready to take you and your dowry, for you'd not be a bad-looking woman if you were properly dressed and brushed up."

He surveyed her something as an Oriental might examine the good points of a marketable slave.

She bravely repressed the passion stored up within her for a more convenient season.

"Perhaps it would not be too much to ask, Jonas, why you have taken this sudden tone. Of course there is some change in your circumstances, and you will surely trust an old friend like me with the good news. I fancied something must have happened when I first saw you come into the house; there was a proud look in your face, Mr. Dawes."

He fell readily into the snare.

"Come, that's sensible, Esther. I know you'd turn out a tramp, old girl, or I should never have been taken with you. You're right—right as an archbishop. I'm once more what I was born to be, Esther. My uncle's dead, old lady, and I'm his heir. Now you see the truth, and won't make any farther difficulty in the matter. You must feel you're not born to be a lady or the head of a gentleman's house, Madam Esther."

The woman's lips worked convulsively, but she swallowed the choking rage that was well nigh bursting within her, and even commanded her voice to a tolerable calmness as she replied:

"Indeed; that is very odd—is it not, Jonas? How was it he left you his heir after all the time he and you were at daggers drawn during his life? It's a grand business, for you any way."

"Oh, he's been half in the grave for years, I know," returned Jonas, with a sanguine nod and it only wanted a breath or a touch to send him over the brink. "As to the property—why, he'd done me that I knew of to leave his money to, and, by way of a final act, he did it by not making a will at all—a sort of compromise with his conscience I suppose."

"You'll be taking a wife I suppose, and turning over a new leaf," said the woman from between her closed teeth.

"Spoke like a prophetess, Esther," he replied, with an excited burst of merriment. "It's all fixed except the day, and a pearl of a bride I've won—as pretty and as charming a girl as ever wore a coronet; and many a duke will envy me, Esther, my good luck. She's worth a king's ransom—so fair and graceful and accomplished. You'll be at the wedding, old girl, and wish me joy in return for the little annuity I mean to settle on you for life."

"To get rid of me—is that it, Jonas? To stop my lips, and to dry my tears," she said, with a dangerous calmness. "Well, perhaps gold can do all that with some folks; we shall see. You're in no state to speak of that, old fellow. Why, you're wet and tired, Jonas dear. How far had you to travel to get this news?"

She laid her hand caressingly on his shoulder, which was, as she had said, pamp with the snow that had fallen in sudden and unlooked-for violence during that early November day.

"It is scarcely winter than your hair," she continued, touching his long, dark locks. "Let me give you something warm and comforting to send you to sleep, and keep you from taking cold now that you're to be a gay bridegroom as soon."

A peculiar smile crossed her lips as she spoke.

"Thanks, thanks, my good Esther. I'm as thirsty as if I hadn't had a drop to-day. The wet outside seems to dry up one's throat, I suppose."

"You shall have it, my dear man—you shall have it. But where have you been—you did not tell me that—to make you so done up? See, I'll get all the things ready while you give me all the news."

She hastily stirred up the fire, and, putting on a saucepan, began to mix a kind of posset in a basin, while he watched her with gradually dulling brain and eyes.

"Where have I been? Why, where should I go but to my uncle's, my good woman, at Rinaldi, you know? A queer kind of place, you'd think it, but

it's a grand house, and plenty of plenishing, as the Scotch call it; to say nothing of the gold and jewels that I remember there in my aunt's time."

"Ah, yes; and was your uncle glad to see you?" she asked, enquiring.

He returned her smile with a kind of idiotic laugh.

"Well, I can't say that his welcome was over warm; but then he wasn't very far from parting for ever, you see, Esther. Poor old fellow," he suddenly resumed, after a pause, "he was kind to me once, but then he turned on me like a tiger, and it sent me to destruction. If he'd behaved differently then I'd never have done it."

"Done what, Jonas—done what, my friend?" she said, coaxingly, as she held the glass to his lips.

He drained it at a draught, without even attempting to reply to her question. When he again looked up she could perceive it was too late to expect further information from his stupefied senses.

Only incoherent words, and vain efforts to comprehend her meaning, rewarded her attempt to extract the replies she sought.

With a disgusted, despairing violence she at length managed to drag him to his bedchamber, and placing him on his low couch, she turned the key in the lock and left him to a repose that she knew well would be unbroken for many a long hour.

"Yes, I'll see to that, I promise you," she said, in a low, muttering tone, as she entered her own small, poorly furnished room. "You'll not trouble person or clerk for that pining girl as long as Esther Farn has wit to scheme or revenge to gratify. And I've my own ideas on this matter, though he little guesses what he betrayed. Any way he's safe till I've had time to think and to plan, and it may be give him a chance for life and liberty."

Extinguishing her light, she hastily sought her long-neglected pillow, and lay as still and motionless, as if sleep, instead of busy passions and anxious thoughts, occupied the remaining hours of the night.

* * * * *

Pauline Lovett had scarcely closed her eyes till the gray, dim dawn of a November morning glimmered in her small chamber.

Visions too fearful for her to venture on their realization without a maddening terror, doubts and struggles in which the sole question of her pure heart was but as to the duty incumbent on her, had driven away even the troubled slumber that had replaced the sound, innocent repose of her happy girlhood.

It was strange that the image of him she had loved with all the fervour of her young, fresh nature, did not mingle with her agonizing contrast of the past and the present forced upon her fevered brain.

But, in truth, the very violence of the reverse she had suffered, the depth of humiliation into which she had been plunged from the very pinnacle of honour and happiness, had invested Quentin and all that belonged to him with a sort of vague mist, that scarcely could permit her to realize her former betrothal to the son of one of England's proudest peers.

Sweet Pauline! Too gentle, too unselfish even to resent her former lover's cold, unfeeling desertion, she yet insensibly shrank from a nature which she felt had never been really akin to her own, or worthy of the worship she had yielded to the false idol of her heart, and at the present moment the one engrossing suspicion that seized upon her was too fearful in its nature, too alarming in its consequences, for one thought of self to mingle with its consideration.

It had clouded her tardy slumber with gloomy visions, and wakened her with a sudden start, as in the course of her troubled dreams she fancied that a stern figure stood over her and a hand was laid on her arm to lead her to some dark cell, where misery and disgrace awaited her.

A faint cry rose to her lips, but not entirely from the cold agony of her wild fancy. There was some reality in its vision, for a figure stood by her bedside, with a face that, if not quite corresponding with her worst imaginings in horror, bore yet no expression of good will to her in its uneasy, frowning earnestness.

It was a woman, whose countenance was perfectly unfamiliar to her, though she dimly fancied it might belong to one of the denizens of the house which she and her father inhabited.

"Hush," said the unexpected guest, in a low voice, placing her finger with a gentle violence on Pauline's lips. "Hush. There is nothing to fear, but I must speak with you alone. Yes, your father is still there," she continued, in reply to the involuntary glance the girl cast towards the adjoining room, "but dead asleep, even as one whom I have left in the same degraded state. Faugh! it is enough to make even me turn from them in disgust. And for you, child, surely it is even more sickening."

She raised the white, delicate hand of the fair young creature, who lay trembling on that humble, uneasy couch, and pushing aside the faded curtain gazed on her with half-wondering pity.

"Yes, you are a strange tenant, an unfit companion in such scenes," she murmured, as if to herself rather than the girl. "Fragile, innocent, and fair. Were I even unconcerned for myself, I might be tempted to save you from such a fate."

Pauline sprang up with sudden joy, such as she might have experienced in happier days at the certainty of her beloved one's truth and affection.

"Oh, will you? can you?" she exclaimed, clasping in her turn the rougher, darker, but not ill-shaped hand of her visitor. "I will indeed bless you if you can aid me in my distress, for I am alone, friendless, helpless. You are a woman, you must have some sympathy, some kindness," she added, pleadingly, as she watched the hardening expression of the marked features that gazed on her with such intensity of purpose.

"That does not follow. Women are fiends sometimes," replied Esther Farn; for it was she who thus stood by the gentle girl. "And so I may be if you do not prove amenable to my will. Tell me, child, do you mean to yield to your father's will and wed Jonas Dawes?"

"Never!" was the firm reply. "Unless, indeed," she added, half inaudibly, "it were to save life."

The woman caught the words.

"Nay," she said, "nay, it may perhaps tend to save it if you comply with my plans; but, if not, there can be but blood and misery and ruin come on all."

Child, will you swear to me that no force shall induce you to give your hand to the man whose own

is stained already, one who would perjure himself in speaking his vows to you? I tell you, girl, Jonas Dawes is my promised, sworn husband; and it is you, with your baby-face and smooth ways, that have taken him from me! If you will not swear to resist, even violence were it needed, I will have revenge on him,

on all, and leave you to your miserable fate as the bride of a——"

She stooped down and whispered something in the girl's ear. And, to her astonishment, the fearful word that was hissed on Pauline's senses brought a look of relief, a gleam of wild, strange joy, to the lovely eyes, instead of the agony and dread she expected.

"Are you sure? Is it really so? No, do not deceive me, unless you have proof—proof!" gasped Pauline, seizing on her with a firm grasp that had an unusual strength in its tension.

"I know it; why should you doubt? It is no such light, trifling gossip to be bandied about without reason," said Esther, bitterly. "And now, listen to me, girl; you must leave this unhallowed place, you must go, under my guidance, far beyond discovery by your precious father or this false man."

Pauline clasped her hands together, and raised her eyes in mere thankfulness to Heaven.

"Merciful Heaven, pardon me if I sin in my fervent gratitude," she whispered, meekly, in her heart. "But it was too horrible to endure, and thou hast been gracious in my terrible hour."

Then, as if awoken to the consciousness of her position, she turned again to the half-wondering, half-indignant Esther.

"You cannot understand me," she said, "but at least I can bless and trust you for the relief you have given me this blessed morn. And you—oh, I can feel for, can weep for you, if it is as you say." And the large tears sprang up in her lovely eyes as she spoke.

Esther's own dark orbs were moistened as she listened.

"Poor child, poor child," she murmured. "Young and truthful, and quick to feel, the time may come when you will be hardened and seared in this wicked, weary, sickening world, and look on every being in it as an enemy. Be persuaded. Come away from this horrid den. Can you not work? Have you no means to earn a livelihood?"

"I can do something. I intend to do something," returned the shivering girl, awed in spite of herself by the mysterious manner of the visitor; "only it is so difficult and so strange when I do not know any one, any place to dispose of my work."

Esther laughed scornfully.

"A pretty wife for Jonas Dawes," she muttered, "when you cannot even find your way about to the first shop that could help you. Child, if you were worth the very bread you eat, you would seek for independence from the slavery that enthrals you in its degradation. But that is nothing at this moment. What concerns me is the one question—Are you willing to come with me, to place yourself under my guidance, and free yourself from these hateful bonds?"

It was a sore dilemma for the unhappy girl. There was temptation in the idea of becoming exempt from that unfeeling father, of whom she lived even in bodily terror. There was a relief in the very sex of her who thus promised to befriend her, and still more blessing in the immunity from the dangers of Jonas Dawes's persecution.

But, with Pauline, the one prevailing voice was that of her pure conscience, her duty, whether for blessing or for sorrow.

"I must not," she said, shivering down in her pillow. "It would be wrong. He is my father. I must not desert him till he releases me from the bond. Heaven knows what I suffer," she added, clasping her small hands in an irresistible burst of agony. "Still I dare not sin against him or my Maker."

Esther gazed at her in a kind of reverence, spite of the dark disappointment and suspicion of her soured nature.

"Either you are an angel or the falsehood of beings," she murmured. "It is like a dream to my dark heart for a creature like you to cross my path, and I scarcely believe in your truth. But time alone can prove, and you will suffer deeper torture than you have yet known if you are deceiving me, and show yourself weak and false."

Pauline shook her head sadly.

"There is little fear," she said, "little fear that I can give way when my whole soul revolts from the sin I should commit. But," she added, quickly, "you have given me no hint of your name or your abode. You have asked all and returned nothing. If it were necessary to communicate with you, to ask your aid, to whom am I to apply? whether am I to turn?"

Esther's cheeks flushed at the gentle remonstrance.

"I believe you now," she said. "Yes, there is a truth in that very reproach which tells me, you are not trying to evade me. And, bad as I may be, there will perhaps be a saving power in aiding a creature like yourself. Yet, for your own sake, I must not tell you the abode where I am as yet forced to dwell, and where I have given him shelter."

"Listen, child. Once, in former days, I was not the degraded being I have since become. And there is one, and only one, who still retains any remembrance or kindly feeling to the fallen outcast. Should any emergency happen here is her address. Go to her and give her this from me, and bid her befriend you for my sake, and communicate with me so soon as she can do so in safety."

She drew a slip of paper and a pencil from her pocket, and wrote on it a few hurried words in a handwriting that confirmed her boast of better days.

"There, that will, at any rate, save you from your direst misery and danger," she said, thrusting it into the very palm of Pauline's hand; "and remember I have warned you, and I rely on your promise never to work my shame and despair, foolish as I may be to have yielded to such a villain's wiles."

And, with a light touch of her lips on the white, damp brow of the fair girl, who well nigh shivered under the unhallowed caress, she noiselessly left the room.

Pauline lay for some brief interval in deep and anxious reflection on that strange interview, which had brought her food alike for thankfulness and alarm. Heaven had not utterly deserted her in her need. It had opened one refuge, however poor, however precarious, for her. And her next desire was to carry out the half-scornful hint of her mysterious visitant, and begin the life of independence that was the only hope left her.

She sprang from her bed, dressed herself in the modest, humble garb that yet could not conceal her refined beauty, and, softly stealing to the door of the adjacent room, listened to the sounds within, which plainly told of the heavy breathing and deep slumber of her coarsely framed father.

The woman had been doubtless right. It would be long before Nicholas would awake from what even Pauline's inexperience guessed to be the sleep of intemperance, and, with a half-knick, half-eager step, she glided rapidly down the stairs and emerged from the house.

It was a strange sensation for her to be alone in the streets at that busy hour, though more than once she had been ordered to procure necessities in the neighbourhood by her imperious father during her residence under his roof.

Pauline's spirit was brave, though her frame and her habits were so shrinkingly delicate, and she hastened on with a quick and unfaltering step in the direction which had already become familiar to her as a landmark—the Houses of Parliament, standing as they did on the very confines of the labyrinth of streets in which her miserable home was situated. Once there she could ask the road to the place whither she was bound—a lace-shop of celebrity in Regent Street, and with a sweet, faltering voice that might well have won the kindly answer it received she made the inquiry of a respectable-looking, plainly dressed woman.

"There, I'm going that way myself, my dear. Are you a stranger in London? You don't look as if you were much used to shifting for yourself, I must say," pursued the garrulous dame.

Pauline expressed her warm thanks, and gave the true if evasive answer that she had been very little used to London streets, and felt timid in their busy intricacies.

"Well, I remember when I came up myself as a girl to my Lady Alice Vernon's! I was quite as bad," returned the kindly woman; "but before I'd been many months in her service I was as bold as a lioness, though I never was giddy and flighty as some girls are when they get into high families. If I had, my husband would never have chosen me, I can promise you," she continued, with a good-humoured little laugh. "May I ask what is your calling, my dear?" she resumed. "I can't think you've many friends, or they wouldn't let such a pretty, delicate creature wander about by herself."

"I am going to try to dispose of some work," said Pauline, evasively. "My mother is dead, and I have not known much of my father, and I want to support myself."

"Well, I know something of the value of these things, having been a lady's maid for so many years," said the woman, in the same hearty tone; "so perhaps I can do you some good, if I were to see what you have got by you, before you go to those shops where they give a mere nothing for what they purchase. Suppose you just come to my house, it is not far, and it is a frightfully cold morning, and you'll not be the worse for a warm cup of tea or so; and meanwhile I'll look over your pretty things."

Perhaps if Pauline had known more of the traps in the metropolis for unwary wanderers she might have hesitated, though there were a hearty kindness and an honesty in the woman's pleasant face and genial manner that gave confidence in the truth of her profession.

So, with a thankful relief at being spared the ordeal of the petition she meditated to strange and perhaps hard men of business, she followed Mrs. Stewart's lead to a neat, respectable-looking house in one of the small streets leading from the back of Oxford Street.

In a few minutes she was established before a blazing fire, and a cup of coffee warmed for her refreshment, and while she partook of the grateful stimulant to her exhausted frame Mrs. Stewart admiringly inspected the exquisite embroidery and imitation point lace Pauline had been preparing for sale.

"Well, I really do think I never saw prettier patterns nor more delicate work," said Mrs. Stewart, after a minute examination. "Listen to me, child. If you can trust me with these pretty things for a day or two I'll show them to Lady Alice, and I believe she'd not only buy them but order more of you; that's better than going to shops, and being paid just the value of the materials, let alone the work."

Pauline gratefully assented, and Mrs. Stewart proceeded to place them carefully in a drawer, then handed her young guest a card.

"You see, my dear, we let lodgings, and that's my card, so you can't mistake the address, and I'll give you a receipt for the things if you like."

"No, no, no! Indeed—indeed I could not dream of it!" exclaimed the girl, flushing with pleasure and gratitude. "I could not doubt you when you are so kind to a stranger."

"Ah, it is not always safe to think that I'm afraid," said the good woman, smiling. "But what's your address, my dear, if I want to send to you?"

Pauline coloured painfully.

"Please do not think ill of me," she said, "but I—I had rather not. It is not mine, and my—"

"Yes, yes, I see. Poor child, poor child," interrupted the woman, "poor, motherless bairn, and a bad father I expect. Well, well, Heaven takes care of the orphan and the helpless, so keep up your heart. Then come to me again to-morrow or next day, and I'll try and see my lady before then."

Pauline could not resist the impulse. She threw her arms round the motherly woman's neck, and sobbed out her gratitude on her substantial shoulder, while Mrs. Stewart hushed and petted her like a weeping child.

Then when the burst of her over-burdened heart was over she took her way with lightened spirits to her home, little dreaming of the tidings that awaited her.

(To be continued.)

THE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—Viscount Walden presided over the annual meeting of the Zoological Society of London. According to the report, the income in 1871 was £4,620, the total number of visitors to the gardens was 595,917, and on the 31st of December last there were 2,072 animals in the menagerie.

NEW CHIMING APPARATUS AT WORCESTER CATHEDRAL.—The new peal of twelve bells at this cathedral has just been furnished with a set of chiming hammers, by which very simple contrivance the whole peal may be easily chimed for service by

one person. The arrangement is the invention of the Rev. H. T. Ellacombe, rector of Clyst St. George, Devon, who first set them up at Bitton, Gloucestershire, in the year 1821, where they have been used ever since.

SCIENCE.

FLEXIBLE MARBLE.—There has been exhibited in America a flexible marble slab, which is procured from the Portland quarries, Vermont. Professor Hay, of the Western University, of Pennsylvania, describes its constitution as—carbonate of lime, 97·5%; magnesia, a trace; silica, 2·05%; water, 0·45%. The above composition and its crystalline character together proclaim it to be a true marble, and, at the same time, a pretty pure specimen of that mineral. The indubitable flexibility of the slab is its most remarkable feature. Dana states that "some of the West Stockbridge marble is flexible in thin pieces when first taken out." The slab in the possession of Mr. Holliday is about two inches thick, and is nearly as flexible as an equal thickness of vulcanized India-rubber.

PRIZES FOR ART WORKMEN.—To encourage technical education in the design and execution of works of art in the precious metals the Goldsmiths' Company have resolved to give the following prizes, viz.:—An annual prize of £50. for the best design for some article in gold or silver which, when manufactured, shall exceed 30 oz. in weight; an annual prize of £25. for the best model of some such article as aforesaid; and an annual prize of £25. for the best execution and workmanship of some such article as aforesaid. Also three annual prizes of £25. each for (1) the best design, (2) the best model, (3) the best execution and workmanship of some article in gold or silver which, when manufactured, shall be less than 30 oz. in weight; and annual prizes of £25. each for the best specimens of (1) chasing or repoussé work, (2) engraving, and (3) enamelling in the precious metals. Originality is necessary to obtain either of the prizes for design, and no copy shall be the subject of a prize. The prizes will be awarded in November. It has also been decided to found a travelling scholarship of £100. per annum to be awarded by the wardens to a student who has shown exceptional talent, and who shall have obtained a prize for design for three successive years, in order to enable him to study art in the precious metals on the Continent.

A NEW MODE OF PROPELLING SHIPS.—A new mode of propelling ships has been invented and patented by Mr. J. J. Allingham. Mr. Allingham's idea is to make the waves, acting upon the hull, propel the ship; and this he proposes to do by the following contrivance. Beneath the keel of the vessel he would fix two oblong steel frames, each fitted with two sets of blades to open and shut crosswise. One frame he would secure to the forepart, and the other to the stern. Both the frames would be fixed at an angle. When the vessel rises in the sea the pressure of the water upon the frames would of necessity force her forward; and when she sank the blades opening would form the opposite angle, and the onward motion would thus be continued. The apparatus would also have the effect of steadyng her. When she rolled over to the right, the blades on the left side of the frames being shut, the frames would tend to bring her back to the perpendicular, and when she rolled to the left the closing of the blades on the right side would have a similar effect. The angle of the frames would have to be increased or lessened according to the state of the weather. To stop the vessel it would simply be necessary to close the blades in the frames. It will be seen that the action of the appliance depends entirely upon the motion of the waves; but at sea it is rarely the case that there is not a sufficient motion in the water to raise a vessel several feet. The inventor believes that the apparatus would be a sufficient propelling power for ships not required to travel at a great speed; but would supply ships, with limited quantity of rigging as auxiliary power, and to provide against accident. The working of the invention was shown recently at Canada Basin, Liverpool, upon a model ship seven feet in length. The little vessel held its way against the tide, and even in comparatively calm water travelled at a considerable speed.

ACTION OF HEAT ON GERMS LIFE.—Respecting the action of heat on protoplasmic life dried on cotton fabrics, Dr. Crace Calvert relates a series of experiments which have a direct bearing on the question of the disinfection of fabrics and wearing apparel by exposure in heated stoves with the object of destroying contagion or animalcule life. To carry out these views, a piece of ordinary gray calico was treated chemically, and washed until free from any sizing material, and dried; this prepared cloth

was then steeped in a solution of putrid albumen, containing abundance of animalcule life, wrung out, and dried at the natural temperature; it was then cut into small pieces five centimetres square. Each of the pieces was rolled up and introduced into a strong glass tube, which was hermetically sealed. Some of these were exposed to temperatures raised successively to 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, and 600 degrees Fahr. Other pieces were placed in pure distilled water, and another series of pieces was placed in tubes containing an albumen solution, each being successively subjected to temperatures varying from 100 to 600 degrees Fahr. In all cases it was found that at 300 degrees Fahr. vibrios were present in small numbers, while in the water series bacteria were also detected. At 400 degrees Fahr. no evidence of life was found. In order to ascertain what changes the calico had undergone, one of each of the small tubes which had been heated to the different temperatures was broken, and its contents carefully examined. The pieces heated to 200 degrees were quite sound; that heated to 300 degrees was of a slightly brown colour, much injured, and for practical purposes completely spoiled. At 400 degrees the cloth was very much charred. These results show that the temperature which will not destroy germ life is quite sufficient to materially injure cotton fabric; hence it is concluded that no beneficial results can be obtained by the employment of public stoves as a means of destroying germ life and contagion.

WAVES OF SOUND AND OF LIGHT.—In the case of a sound wave—moving 1,100 feet a second whatever the wave length—if the length be diminished, more vibrations enter the ear in the same time and the pitch rises; if it be increased, less vibrations enter, and the pitch lowers. Light waves are strictly analogous; whenever any one of the coloured waves which form white light is lengthened its colour changes towards the red end of the spectrum; when it is shortened, towards the violet. Hence change of pitch in the case of sound, or of colour in the case of light, is evidence of motion, either to or from the observer; which it depends on whether the wave is lengthened or shortened. Now, while the motion of a star at right angles to the line of sight is easily detected and measured by the telescope, motion in the direction of this line is capable of measurement only by the spectroscope; if the motion be diagonal, then by both of these instruments together. Hence the motion of a fixed star in space, or of a whirlwind on the sun, may be measured by the change, in refrangibility, which certain lines in the spectrum undergo. To illustrate this point by means of sound waves Professor Mayer has originated a new and beautiful experiment, which he recently employed in a lecture. With a lantern, the image of a tuning fork beating 256 times a second—and giving the note Ut—was thrown on the screen. By the side of one of the prongs, and just touching it, was a carefully rounded and varnished cork ball, suspended by a filament of silk. On sounding a second fork placed on its case, and tuned in accurate unison with the first, anywhere in the room, even 30 feet distant, the first fork was thrown into vibration and the image of the cork ball was projected on the screen a foot or two away from the prong. When, however, the second fork was sounded, and the lecturer walked rapidly—at a rate of 8 feet a second—towards or from the first, touching the case only when in motion, no motion of the cork was observed; the wave being in this way shortened or lengthened by an amount sufficient to throw it out of unison with the lantern fork. Again, a third fork, vibrating 254 times a second, produced no effect on the ball; but when sounded and placed on its case, as this was swung rapidly towards the first fork, the wave length was thereby so shortened as to bring it into unison with this, and the ball promptly responded. A fourth fork, vibrating 258 times, showed the same phenomenon, when placed on its case as this was swung away from the first fork, the wave thus being shortened into unison. The demonstration was most complete and satisfactory. Professor Mayer stated that he purposed making some quantitative experiments with the apparatus, which will be of the highest value to science.

The "Cross of Merit" for 1870-1 has been conferred by his Majesty the King of Bavaria on Mr. Robert Landells, in appreciation of his sketches made during the late campaign.

CENTENARIANS.—There is now living at No. 6, Surman's Almshouses, Isleworth, an inmate named Ann Sloomb, who completed her hundredth year on the 17th ult. She was from the year 1828 to 1839 matron of the old Isleworth workhouse. Mrs. Sloomb was born at Send, near Guildford, April 17, 1772, and at present is hale and hearty, and on her last birthday planted a tree in the garden of the almshouses to commemorate the event. Some few months since a female died in the Isleworth union workhouse at the advanced age of 104 years.



[THE UNSPOKEN WORD.]

ADA ARGYLE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Courage and comfort, all shall yet go well.

King John.

AFTER a consultation it was resolved to wait until the next morning for the return of the boats, and in the meantime to make all practicable signals to attract the attention of the wanderers.

The guns were to be fired from time to time.

"To-night," said Fred, "as soon as it is dark, we will make a huge bonfire at the edge of the water, and keep it blazing all night. It will be equal to a lighthouse—rather better, in fact."

"Maybe it will bring somebody here what we don't want," said the old German. "Aha!"

"Yes, maybe so. We must take our chance of that," replied Mr. Annesley.

One proposed that Rashleigh and Shelburn should take one of the two boats which remained and row up towards the island in search of the missing men; but this was objected to as lessening the strength of their little party unnecessarily, while it gave no promise of favourable results which might not be otherwise attained.

Some believed that they were in danger both from Indians and wild beasts, and were not disposed to place confidence in the former, although the large party landed from the sloop had seen a few who retired into the wood without offering to molest them.

"If the white party had been smaller perhaps the red-men would have attacked them," said Mr. Rolfe.

"Indians are very unreliable. It is best to be on our guard."

The afternoon was spent in strolling upon the beach, looking for the voyagers; and as Frederick seemed to gravitate towards Ada at all times he soon appeared to acquire a sort of proprietorship of her society, with which no one sought to interfere. It was not a time for love-making, but the spell of her potent charms was upon him, and, however durable or transitory the impression might prove, every word and action of the young man showed that for the present hour at least he was fascinated.

Ada did not exert herself to please or to attract; it was as much her nature to do this as it is of the rose to be beautiful and fragrant. But she could not be insensible to the devotion of her new friend, whose charms of person and mind were rare, and his flattering attentions were not alloyed by any exhibition of that conceit and assurance which are so often the bane of gifted and cultivated people.

Rashleigh was easy, graceful, and self-possessed, but never port or presumptuous, unless indeed he had been over bold in that one impulsive act on re-

joining Miss Argyle which has been recorded of him, the remembrance of which astonished him now, although it gave him a prolonged delight.

The afternoon wore away and evening came without any reward to the watchers, whose anxiety increased to alarm, for, although none of the present party save Ada and old Mr. Hare had friend or relative in the boats, all felt a deep interest in the men who had so freely risked their lives for others, and all fully sympathized with Miss Argyle.

Towards sunset the young men were active in gathering underbrush from the forest and green boughs from the trees; and as soon as the twilight had vanished they had a glowing, crackling pile of fire, mounting up to the clouds, and sending its light far and wide over the calm waters.

Surely the wanderers could not fail to see such a beacon if they were within a dozen miles of it, nor, seeing, could they fail to comprehend the design with which it had been lighted.

An hour or two before daybreak all hearts were thrilled by a shout across the sea, which no one doubted announced the approach of the lost boats.

In a tumult of joy every one rushed to the edge of the water, whence an answering cheer went forth into the darkness, and was replied to by another hail, evidently from several voices.

Of course it was the pilot's boat which had arrived, it having separated from the captain's, as we have seen, on the preceding evening, just after the arrest of young Hare; but no one of the joyous expectants on the shore doubted, until its keel grated upon the pebbles, that its consort was close at hand.

Ada stood with outstretched arms, ready to clasp her father, and old Mr. Hare had rushed into the boat at the little vessel's edge to grasp the hand of his son; and although both were disappointed for the moment they did not doubt that another minute would give their friends to their embrace.

When the first hearty congratulations had been exchanged half a dozen voices inquired how near the other boat was, and whether all in it were safe.

"Not very near," the pilot—Mr. Case—answered, gravely—"not less than twenty miles off, by the route we have come; and, as to their safety, I am very sorry to say—"

A slight scream from Ada interrupted this speech, and Mr. Case, turning towards her, said:

"No, no. Mr. Argyle is all right, I believe; but the truth is we got into difficulty with some Indians on an island by means of that hot-headed Phil Hare, who shot one of them, and they've taken him to roast—"

A heart-piercing moan now came from the outer edge of the little crowd which encircled the speaker,

and an old man, stretching out his hands feebly for support, fell heavily to the ground.

"What—who is this?" asked the pilot, as some rushed to raise and assist the swooning man.

"His father; old Mr. Hare! You did not know him?" said Mr. Rolfe.

"No; but he was left upon the wreck."

"You have not then heard that they were rescued?"

"Yes, by a sloop, and taken out to sea in her."

"No, they were landed a dozen miles south of here, and have found their way to us. Here also is Mr. Rashleigh, and others who were on the wreck."

The pilot of course knew but few of the passengers; he had left a large number on the beach; he found but thirteen, and he had met in that exciting meeting observed that any were new comers.

"Whist! He is reviving!" said Rashleigh. "Be careful what you say. Is young Hare really lost? Cannot you give him some hope?"

"Not truthfully," replied Case, who in an undertone related the particulars of the affair to a little circle of auditors who gathered around him apart from the stricken man and from those who ministered to him. "He will surely be put to death," he added, "if he has not been already killed. I never saw more determined men, though they were never more peaceable before this affair, and they did not seem influenced by passion so much as by a sense of justice. The captain and Argyle went back with the poor fellow to plead for him, I suppose, or at least to be with him to the last. They seemed to have little or no hope of saving him."

"If they had a little, or if you have a little, pray come and say so to this wretched father," said Mr. Annesley, coming up in time to hear this last remark. "He has just fully returned to consciousness, and his grief is heartrending."

"I will!" the pilot replied, walking over to the sufferer, who it was feared was stricken with paralysis, for he could not rise, nor stand when assisted to his feet.

"Let me die, my good friends," he said; "let me die now if I can. Better so than to live and know this terrible thing. Oh, what—what have we done that such an awful doom should come upon us? Pray for him, good Mr. Annesley—pray for him—not for me. Let Heaven visit its judgments upon my head, and spare, oh, spare my beloved son."

"Do not despair, my dear sir," said Rashleigh, for the pilot was slow to speak. "Mr. Case thinks there is some hope, for Mr. Argyle and the captain are with you, you know, and they will get him off if possible."

"Do you—do you think there is any hope?" asked the old man, turning eagerly to Mr. Case.

"Oh, yes—some!" replied the man thus appealed to; "very little, I fear; but where there is life there is hope."

"Ah, is that all? Why, you can say that of the dying."

"I think there is a good deal of hope!" interposed one of the volunteer oarsmen who had been in the pilot's boat. "That Mr. Argyle is a host, sir. He'll manage it some way. He'll talk them out of it, I tell you; I never knew anything like him. He'd talk the bark off a tree, I believe, if he set about it. I don't give Phil Hare up—not I! I shall expect to see him here, alive, before sundown to-morrow, and if there was no other way for him to come I should expect to see him on Mr. Argyle's back, I should."

This emphatic speech imparted courage to the half-dead father, but it provoked the pilot to a reply as he turned away, which Mr. Hare did not hear, but it created a new alarm in the breasts of others.

"It's easy to talk like that," he said, "but what is the use of giving unfounded hopes? If Mr. Argyle should save himself he will do well. I know something about Indians. He trusts to that chief, who hasn't any real power, and his people will do as they please when their blood is up. I shouldn't like to be in Mr. Argyle's shoes, or in Captain Chrome's either, and I don't much expect to see any of them back here."

These remarks were heard by Ada, and they insured her a more miserable day than any which she had yet passed; but she received abundance of solace and of more cheerful predictions, while the plain-spoken pilot was voted to be a hero of the darkest dye.

The dawn was yet two hours distant, but no one thought of sleep except the voyagers, who were soon slumbering heavily upon the ground on the boughs, while the rest discussed the mournful news they had heard and administered what aid they could to the principal sufferer.

The pilot's boat had brought another supply of food, the gift of the Indians, which had been somewhat reduced in volume by the way—for the men had stopped on the coast of the island to cook and eat a hearty supper and take a few hours' repose.

They were more tired than hungry now, and they slept until the sun was several hours high; and, when they awoke, they found that Mr. Hare had recovered the use of his limbs, and was beginning for a boat and a companion to go off to the island.

No one volunteered to accompany him on so hopeless an errand; but a few hours later it was thought advisable to send out one to look for the captain's party, and pilot them in, if discovered, at the beacon could not be made serviceable by daylight.

"Phil's fate is settled before this time," said Mr. Case, "and they are all probably on their way to the main land."

Rashleigh and young Werter, with two of the former oarsmen, volunteered for this service, and they started a little after noon.

After rowing about eight miles in a north-easterly direction to their great joy they discovered and signalled the captain's boat, which was steering directly shoreward, but, answering their signs, its occupants changed their course and came towards them.

Rashleigh and his comrades decided not to wait for them, as they were several miles distant, but turned directly homeward, making sure that they were followed.

This was about three o'clock, and a little before six they were again on the beach with their friends, who had been long watching them, and were yet more anxiously regarding the other still-distant boat.

"How many are in it?" was the inquiry in everybody's mouth; for the answer, it was conceded, would settle the question of poor Philip's fate.

The anxious spectators on the beach knew that there must be seven persons in the approaching yawl, if Philip Hare had been brought off, but it soon became apparent that there were only six, and the despairing father, after counting them again and again with trembling voice, and more trembling arm outstretched, resigned himself to the most bitter moans, mingled with imprecations upon the whole Indian race.

The voyagers had stopped half or three-quarters of a mile from the shore, but only for a few moments, and they were now again under way, and while four oars were plied and one sat at the helm, the sixth man (Argyle, it seemed, from his size) waved his kerchief vigorously, and now and then took off his hat and swung it cheerily over his head.

Surely, surely there was some significance in those gestures, and old Mr. Hare, seeming determined to end his agonizing suspense, shoved off a boat and leaped in, followed by others, who appreciated his position and would not see him go alone.

In a few minutes the two boats were within hail; the outgoing one stopped, and the oarsmen, with dripping blades uplifted, listened to the tidings which were shouted across the intervening space:

"A-l-l r-i-g-h-t! Mr. Hare is a-l-i-v-e and s-a-f-e!"

Ah, what words shall describe the bliss of that old man as he fell on his knees to render thanks to Heaven, then shouted his ecstasy and hugged his gratulating companions, then climbed into the other boat, which was soon at their side, to hear from Argyle's own lips a confirmation of the life-giving news?

What was it to him though all his hard-earned savings were required to ransom his son? He would freely give them—oh! how freely—and never would he complain or murmur at the sacrifice.

The joy was very general over this intelligence, and on reaching shore Mr. Argyle, who was in high spirits, kissed and embraced his waiting daughter with such unusual tenderness, and greeted Rashleigh so very warmly, that Ada believed that moment to be the happiest of her life.

"The news is better than good," said old Werter, shaking hands with Mr. Hare; "and as to the money, we'll all help you a little. Jacob and I have got a little, and we will give you ten pounds. There it is!"

He handed out the coins as he spoke, which Mr. Hare hesitated to accept, though expressing his thanks, for the Germans looked like very poor men.

"No—no, take it! We have got some more!" said Werter, who had, in fact, brought a considerable sum of money with him which he and his son carried about their persons. They were intending to purchase and to stock Government farm—Uncle Sam did not give away his lands in those days—then to send home to Fatherland for the wife and five or six young boys and girls.

Captain Chrome and Mr. Argyle, who had intended to get up a contribution for the Hares, were much pleased with this impromptu offering, and at once added, liberally to it, others following their example, though some gave but little and apparently with reluctance.

Old Mr. Wolfe, however, who had taken a lesson on the vanity of great wealth, except when used for good ends, promptly handed out twenty pounds, and Shuburn, who was probably more nearly penniless than any person present, said to him:

"If you have another twenty to spare you may give it for me. I will account to you for it."

It was the first allusion which he had made to the extraordinary contract between himself and the banker, and he awaited the reply with some trepidation.

"Certainly—certainly," answered Wolfe, handing out the money; "I am glad to see you so liberal. I can spare you some more for yourself, if you wish. One—two—three—or five hundred. It really makes no difference, you know."

"Thank you. I will accept of five hundred, then, with great pleasure," returned Shuburn, who could scarcely believe that it would be forthcoming—much less that he should ever receive that vast fortune—as he regarded it—which the banker owed him.

He had never doubted that Wolfe would seek to evade his contract, and put him off with a comparatively trifling sum, and this idea still clung to him, being founded, perhaps, on a semi-consciousness that he had not earned, and really was not entitled to it.

The sum seemed too great; he feared that he would be extorted if he demanded or received it, even from one so well able to pay as the wealthy banker; but, although this was a very natural view of the case for a man of life-long poverty to take, it was not Mr. Wolfe's intention, who had not the least idea of trying to repudiate the debt.

"Take a thousand, Shuburn, if you don't mind taking it large," said the banker, handing out a five-hundred pound note and five-one-hundreds; "I drew some money before I embarked on the steamer, which I expected to use, and did not."

Shuburn did not mind taking it large, and he accepted the money with thanks, and with very evident delight, gazing especially upon the big note with curiosity, as something he never before had seen, certainly not handled.

The sum raised for Mr. Hare on the spot was nearly half what it was supposed would be required for the ransom of his son, and the captain did not doubt he could obtain a great deal more when they overtook that division of their comrades who had gone north, whom he thought they would be sure to find at the village described by the Indians.

Mr. Hare thanked him and said he would gratefully accept what was freely given, but he did not feel that he had a right to ask for more. What he was most solicitous about now was prompt action. He thought he had money enough now, and if any of his late companions were willing to contribute to make up his loss, they could do it at any time hereafter as well as now.

"Oh, yes; you've got money enough," said the pilot, who had given only a half-crown to the fund. "Rum, and tobacco, and pipes don't cost much, and you can get cheap blankets and gewgaws, and, as to

the horses, any old broken-down canal horse will do for them."

"We don't propose to deal in that way," Mr. Argyle replied.

"No, no, no," added Hare; "no cheating."

"I don't call that cheating," rejoined the pilot.

"I do not suppose you do," returned Hare. "I never knew a man to call any act fraudulent that he did himself or recommend others to do."

"Do you mean to insinuate—"

"No, no, my friend. I insinuate nothing. I say I won't try to cheat the Indians by palming off worthless things upon them, when we have promised them good ones."

Case replied sullenly that he did not think it necessary to keep faith with thieving, murdering savages, and Hare answered that that doctrine, when carried out, was just calculated to make savages, thieves, and murderers.

"Treachery begets its like, the world over," he said.

"Oh! does it?" returned the pilot, scornfully. "You are very wise, no doubt, but it seems to me that a man receiving charity might be a little more modest."

"Very true. I am but a beggar," responded the old man, quickly; "but there's your half-crown back. So we, at least, can talk on equal terms now."

He threw the money on the ground as he spoke and raised the laugh so effectually against the pilot that the latter retired from the contest, grumbling something about the age of his antagonist being his protection.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Oh, many a shaft of random sent!

Finds mark the weaker little meat!

And many a word of random spoken!

May shot or wound hear that's broken!

It was so late now, and the newly arrived party were so tired, that it was decided not to begin their journey northward until morning.

Then they would go in the boats, for having now what they considered certain intelligence of a village on the coast at no great distance, they no longer hesitated on this mode of travel.

Those who had gone before had preferred to travel by land, keeping on the highest ground at some distance from the lake in order that they might not overlook any small village or even any settler's cabin where they could procure food, of which they stood in so great need.

They had even thought that they might run down some animal, or kill pigeons or other birds with stones; but they had no hooks or lines for fishing.

So that all three of the boats were now in possession of the party who remained on the beach, and they had ample room for a comfortable voyage.

They supped luxuriously off the game and fish—Werter and Congo being the cooks—and there was so very much to tell on both sides that there was no lack of amusement for the evening.

But Rashleigh, to whom the barren shore had seemed like the "Happy Valley" of Abyssinia, heard something that evening which did not prove amusing to him.

In reviewing the perils they had passed Mr. Argyle expressed great apprehension that his family and friends would hear of the loss of the steamer before they could get intelligence of his and Ada's safety.

"It will be dreadful for my wife and Arabella," he said; "and, as to poor Walsingham, I am sure it will drive him distracted."

"Walsingham?" asked Frederick, faintly, and with dire misgivings. "Is that one of your sons?"

"Oh, bless you, no! My son-in-law that is to be!" replied Argyle, without the least suspicion of the pain that he was inflicting. "Ada's beau!"

Fred lost the power of speech for a few moments, and when he spoke he scarcely knew what he said.

A blow from a mallet could scarcely have stunned him more—certainly it could not have occasioned a tithe of the anguish which these words evoked.

What! Ada in love with and betrothed to another man! Ada—who he was sure had read all his heart, and in whose beautiful eyes he thought he had seen a warm approval of his passion.

Had she been only amusing herself with his devotion, and leading him on to a declaration which would enable her to number him among her conquests?

Alas! yes, it must be so. He saw it all now, and his distress was unbounded. Earth and sky and sea were all changed in their aspect, and nothing he saw was sure remained to him but the less of a miserable life.

Even if it were all romantic folly—if it were impossible that a three-days' love could inflict such a lasting wound upon any human heart—yet the sentiment had for the time all the force of a dreadful life.

He was unhappy beyond description, and he be-

lieved he should always remain so, but his grief derived its chief poignancy from the conviction that the idol of his heart was vain and insincere and disingenuous. Nay, that the Ada of his imagination had really never existed.

She did not hear the conversation between her father and her lover, and Rashleigh did not pursue the subject by making any inquiries about Walsingham, for he dared not trust himself to do this, lest his voice or manner should betray his agitation.

That he was a gay young gallant, "the glass of fashion and the mould of form," he did not doubt, and that he was in every respect his own superior he feared was but too probable. Your true lover has never an exalted estimate of his own worth in presence of the mistress of his affections.

Argyle was surprised, perhaps offended, at his friend's seeming indifference; so he did not pursue the subject, but replied coldly to some remark of the young man's on another topic.

When Ada and Frederick met again there was a change in his manner which she could not fail to notice; it was not constraint alone, there were dejection and resentment in his air, and she at once suspected their cause. Her father had surely made some revelation to him in relation to her suitor, Walsingham.

But had she been guilty of concealment in regard to her relations with him? Nay, she was conscious of no wrong in this respect, for Frederick had given her no opportunity or excuse for speaking of them.

He had not offered or declared himself, and what presumption and egotism would it have been in her to tell him that she had another lover, whom her parents favoured, and they designed for her husband!

Yet she might have been more repelling, less cordial, less appreciative, since she could not fail to see her new friend's devotion to her. Perhaps she had erred. She greatly feared that she had; but, oh, how she wished that Rashleigh would speak out now in some way that would give her an opportunity to explain—to exculpate herself. If he would only complain of her it would be a relief. But he did not.

Alas, how much of the misery of human life is occasioned by this neglect to speak out at the proper time and seek explanations.

A little misunderstanding between friends, fostered by silence and brooding, grows into a mountain of suspicion and doubt, which separates them for ever.

No; Frederick did not complain. He was cereimoniously polite to Ada when they met, but he no longer sought every opportunity to be at her side.

He seemed to find objects of interest elsewhere. He had a long talk with Mr. Hare, another with young Werter about hunting and the probability of being able to shoot a deer at night, and finally he went off fishing with Congo, at early twilight, to try the magic hook and line of which the ex-steward had boasted.

This was certainly a very marked change in Rashleigh's conduct, but it did not end here; for in the morning, when the party embarked, Frederick, without remonstrance, permitted himself to be assigned to one of the boats which did not carry Ada.

He was at her side to assist her into the vessel, and when, after doing so, he stepped back, Argyle, in surprise, said:

"Come, are not you going with us?"

"No, sir," replied the young man. "I am to go in the pilot's boat, I believe."

Ada looked at him; their eyes met; she blushed and smiled, and tried to say, "Come with us!"

They were but three short words, and could easily have been spoken at another time, but her utterance failed now. She sat down without speaking, and Frederick, raising his hat once more, turned away, while the master-of-fact father said:

"Well—well, it's no matter. The boats will be close together."

They were not even that. The pilot's boat was the last that started, and as they went in line it kept many rods behind the first, affording, of course, no opportunity for conversation.

Rashleigh was as miserable as his worst enemy could have wished, yet he combated his grief and tried to find amusement in discussing the recent exciting events with his comrades. He had his turns at rowing also, and, in his agitation, he unconsciously threw such energy into the work that his fellow oarsmen were obliged several times to check him.

"That kind of rowing," one of them said, "might do for a half-hour's pull, but it isn't the thing for an all-day job. Slow and steady wins a long race."

They had started at dawn, and after three hours of progress they landed for breakfast, and were not a little surprised as they approached the beach to see a farmer-like man coming towards them from the direction of a ploughed field about half a mile distant.

He was a middle-aged man, coarsely attired, and with a shaggy look, owing to his long, uncombed hair and beard, but there was an unmistakeable

gleam of good nature shining in his homely face, mixed with an air of wonder—nay, of utter astonishment.

"Who are you, my friend, and where do you come from?" asked Captain Chrome, shaking hands with him as he came up.

"Wal—I'm Absalom Goff, I am, and I live just back here apiece!" said the man; "but who are all yew?"

The captain told him in as few words as possible, eliciting many a "Marcy's sakes!" and "dew tell!" then inquired if he knew anything of a village on the coast which was supposed to be within twenty or thirty miles north.

"Sartin' sure I do! Breown Teown ain't more'n nine miles off on a little bay, where the steamboats sometimes come in bad weather. It's a right peart little place, too! More'n a hundred and fifty inhabitants."

"Only nine miles off!" repeated the captain. "Come, my boys, that will do;" and a succession of hearty cheers attested the joy with which the news was received.

"You've stopped here to breakfast, hav yew?" continued Absalom, in reply to part of what the captain had said. "Now I tell you what; you'd best go around to my cabin. I don't know as you kin all git in at once, but that's no matter. My wife will help you cook your fish and game; I see you've got plenty on't, and we've got some good bread, and some tea—"

"Tea! Tea! Have you tea, my good fellow?" asked Argyle.

"Oh, yes—a little; I don't know as there's enough to go round 'mong thirty people. We don't often use it, only Sundays and sich; but my wife bought half a pound the last time she was to the village."

"And he'll have salt and pepper, too, for our fish!" said one.

"And knives and forks to eat with!" added another.

"And perhaps tobacco!" exclaimed a third.

"Oh, yes, I've got all them things!" replied Goff. "Not much tobacco, but there's some, and two old pipes."

"Why, what a luxurios old chap you must be, and what a Paradise we've got into!" said Argyle, laughing. "See what good a little privation does once in a while. Come on, comrades, for I see you've all decided to go."

No one hesitated, and the shipwrecked party were soon on the move, following Absalom in a long line, chatting and laughing.

"Have you any neighbours around here?" asked Captain Chrome.

"None nearer than the village; the land has all been took up between here and there by speculators, who put up tents on it, and sleep one night in 'em, and then swear they are actual settlers. One chap had a house on wheels, sir, that he drew about with oxen from one place to another, so he could swear he had put a house on the land."

"Why, is real estate thought so valuable here?" asked Argyle, quickly.

"Why, sir, the bay at Breown Teown is considered a great natural harbour, capable of holding most all the shipping in the world—though what it should ever want to come here for I'm sure I don't know, but the speculators do, I suppose—and so, as I said, they took up the land."

"Oh, yes."

"I got as near to the village as I could. But I'm a real settler. Me and Betsey, and the two boys and two gals, and Towsler. Next year we hope to have a pair of steers and a plough. This year we've dug to dig."

"But why didn't you have your steers, or oxen, and plough this year?" asked Argyle, much interested.

"Why didn't we? Why, because it took all our money to pay for the land and to git here. But the land is paid for, sir, and I've got Uncle Sam's patent, and can show it to you. And nothing can take the land away from me now, except an earthquake."

"Very true."

"And we've got five pounds laid up towards getting the steers. I should have had more if Betsey hadn't paid out some for that tea. By next year this time I expect to have twenty pounds saved."

"Twenty pounds, eh?"

"Yes, sir; and then with the cattle and plough we'll get along faster after that. Oh, we're doing mighty well here, sir, and are gittin' quite forehanded and independent like."

"Now, here's contentment—nay, happiness—in a small hut—a condition which most people would consider abject poverty," said Argyle, dropping a little behind the farmer, and addressing Captain Chrome and others in a low voice. "I hope we shan't turn this man's head if we make up a little purse."

"A purse that will hold a pair of oxen and a plough?" asked Rolfe.

"Yes, yes, exactly; and perhaps a cow and a few pigs."

"I'll give twenty pounds," said Shelburn, quickly. "And I the same; I can't be behind Shelburn," added the banker.

Mr. Argyle, Captain Chrome, and others added smaller sums, and, although most of the company were not asked to contribute, over fifty pounds were quickly pledged.

All was done quietly, and without Mr. Goff's knowledge.

"Let us wait till we are about to leave before giving it to him," said one; "and see first how he treats us."

This was agreed to.

(To be continued.)

A DARING GAME; OR, NEVA'S THREE LOVERS.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The sudden entrance of Neva Wyndo into the midst of her exulting enemies struck them dumb. Craven Black sat with hands outstretched, as they had grasped the letter Neva had snatched from him, his face growing livid, and a look of consternation glaring from his eyes.

Octavia Black stood, half leaning still over her husband's shoulder, as if turned to stone, the mocking smile frozen on her lips, a look of terror and defiance on her face. Mrs. Artress, retaining more of self-possession than the others, stared at Neva with unmistakable hatred and triumph. The treacherous Frenchwoman dropped her gaze, and grew pale and awe-stricken.

Neva, still clutching the letter to her bosom, looked at her enemies one by one, her red-brown eyes blazing. It seemed to those who looked upon her that the red flames leaped from her eyes of gloom, and they trembled before her. Her pure, proud face was deathly white, but it was stern and awful in its wondrous beauty as she turned it from one to another in an expression of seething contempt that stung Craven and Octavia Black to the very soul.

Then, without a word, but with her letter still clutched against her panting breast, the young girl swept from the room with the air, the step, and the haughty carriage of an insulted empress.

The conspirators heard her slowly ascend the stairs to her own room. They stared at each other for a brief space in an utter and terrible silence. Mrs. Craven Black was the first to speak, and her companions started as her voice broke the dead and awful hush.

"Well, upon my word!" she ejaculated, forcing a strange, hoarse, and uneasy laugh, that jarred on the ears of her fellow conspirators.

"A queen of tragedy!" muttered Mrs. Artress, referring to Neva's appearance and departure from their presence.

Craven Black sighed and scowled darkly. An ugly smile disfigured his mouth.

"Well," he said, "matters have been brought to a crisis. I would have preferred to keep up the semblance of friendship a while longer, but the girl has torn the masks from our faces. She has declared war—so war let it be. In the fight before us the strongest must conquer!"

"I could not dream she would follow me," said the Frenchwoman, deprecatingly. "I am not to blame. I am sure, very sure, that she is going to run away. She will leave the Wilderness to-night."

The ugly smile deepened on Craven Black's visage.

"We will see!" he said, and his voice was terrible in its significance and threatening.

The Frenchwoman had read Neva's purpose aright. The young lady went up to her room and closed her door, and held in the flames of the bright wood fire the torn, crumpled letter she had written to her lover, and had rescued from the hands of Craven Black. She let the small burning remnant of paper fall upon the blazing log, and watched the blue, shrivelled-ash wave to and fro in the current of air, and then whirl upward into the capacious chimney.

The letter thus destroyed, Neva, with a white face and wild eyes, sat about her few preparations for departure. Her soul was in a tumult; her brain seemed on fire. She could not think or reason yet; she only knew that she longed to get away—that she must get away.

She put on her round hat, and was about to throw about her a light shawl, when a sudden fierce rattling of the casements in the wind warned her that night in late September in the Scottish Highlands was likely to be cold.

She opened one of her trunks and dragged out to the light a pretty sleeved jacket of the soft and delicate fur of the silver fox, and this she put on. She took up her muff and dressing-bag, and hurried into the ante-room, panting and breathless, eager for the outer air.

The door opening from the ante-room into the hall

was closed. Neva pulled it open, and found herself face to face with Mr. and Mrs. Craven Black, Mrs. Artress and the Frenchwoman!

The girl recoiled for an instant before this human barricade as if she had received a blow. Then she waved her hand in a haughty, commanding gesture, and said :

"Let me pass! Stand aside!"

"Not so fast, Miss Wynde," said Craven Black, mockingly. "This lady, my wife, is your personal guardian, and she has the authority to control your movements——"

The girl's passionate eyes flashed stormily at her enemies.

"Let me pass, I say!" she cried, in a low, suppressed voice. "Attempt to detain me here, and I will arouse the household!"

"Do so," said Craven Black, tauntingly. "The two stolid women in the kitchen cannot hear you; and if they could, they have been prepared for your outcries, and will not heed them. The sailors are on board the yacht in the loch below. You are out of the world up in this eagle's eyrie, and you may beat your wings against the bars of your cage till you drop dead, my pretty bird, but no one will heed your flutterings. Call if you will. Try the effect of a shriek."

He took a step nearer to Neva, who retreated before him, shrinking from his touch. He went after her into the room, his companions following. Celeste closed the door, and placed herself against it.

"Sit down, Neva," said Octavia Black, with a mocking intonation. "Lay aside your hat and sacque. Don't abandon us upon the very evening of our arrival in our new residence."

Neva made no answer, but Octavia shrank before the storm accusing of the girl's gloomy, passionate eyes.

"As your guardian," said Mrs. Black, recovering her self-possession, which had been momentarily shaken, "I desire to ask you whither you were about to go when we interrupted you?"

"I might refuse to answer, madam," replied Neva, "but you know as well as I do that I was about to start for Inverness on foot, and that I intended to go back to Hawkhurst and to my friends. Unfortunately, Mrs. Black, you are my personal guardian, but Sir John Freise and my other guardians are desirous that I should choose another in your stead, and I shall now do so. Your character, madam, is at last revealed to me in all its moral hideousness. My recent vague suspicions of you have become certainties. Mr. Atkins was right in his distrust of you. But, madam, because my dead father loved and trusted you to the last hour of his life, because you have borne his honoured name, I will spare you from blame and obloquy, and screen your ill-doings and ill-treatment of me even from my guardians. I will agree to thus screen you if you will stand aside and let me go forth now, at this moment."

"But, Neva," said Mrs. Black, "you will lose your way on the mountains; you will make a misstep over some cliff, or into some ravine; or you will die of cold and exhaustion long before you can reach Inverness. It is twenty miles as the crow flies. It is forty as you would have to travel. We will not send you in the yacht. Your scheme of departure is impracticable. In fact, you cannot go."

"You mean to detain me here a prisoner?"

"Call yourself by what name you will," said Craven Black, "you cannot go."

The young girl looked around her desperately like a hunted deer. There was no pity or sympathy in those hard and greedy faces. Had she been penniless she would have been as free as the birds of the air; but, being rich, her enemies looked upon her as their rightful prey.

"Are you a pack of outlaws?" demanded Neva, her young voice ringing through the room. "How dare you thus interfere with the liberty of an Englishwoman?"

"You are not an English woman, but only an English girl," interrupted Octavia Black. "You are a minor, without right to liberty or the exercise of your own will. You are my ward, Neva, and as your guardian I command your obedience. How can you reconcile it with your conscience to rebel against your step-mother?"

"You are not my step-mother," cried Neva, hotly. "When you ceased to be my father's widow you ceased to be my step-mother."

"I think the law takes another view of such a case," said Mrs. Black. "But, at any rate, I am still your guardian, and as such I have a right to read all the letters you write or receive. I read your letter to Lord Towyn, and exhibited it to my husband."

"And to your husband's cousin, and to your maid!" said Neva. "I am aware of all that. As to your right to examine my letters, I do not believe in it. Your action in opening my letter to Lord Towyn," and Neva's cheeks flamed, "and in reading its contents aloud to your familiars, was an act

of the grossest indelicacy, and want of honour and moral principle. Any person with a grain of decency in his composition will confirm what I say."

Mrs. Craven Black was stung to fury by this outspoken declaration, its truthfulness giving it keener effect. She compressed her lips, being unable to speak, and hurried to and fro with uneven tread like a caged tigress.

"We will not discuss the right or wrong of Mrs. Black's very natural and proper act," said Craven Black. "She had the right to read your letter, and therefore did so. I think you have no farther fault to find with us than this?"

"Such an indecent letter for a young lady to write," murmured Mrs. Artress, turning her eyes upward. "'My own dear Arthur.' I never was so shocked!"

Neva turned her back upon the woman without a word, and replied to Craven Black as if she had not heard his cousin speak.

"I have farther fault to find with you, Mr. Black," the young girl said, haughtily. "You and your wife have been false and treacherous to me from the beginning. You planned to come to this place before you left Hawkhurst, and you sent Mrs. Artress on in advance to prepare this house for your reception. Yet you pretended to me that we were to go by rail into Yorkshire. You allowed me to convey that impression to my friends, while you intended the impression to be a false one. The manner in which you proceeded from the railway station to Gravesend, and in which you have come to this place, has been secret and furtive, as if you meant to throw off pursuit. You have shamefully deceived me, and I regard your conduct and that of your wife, now that my eyes have been opened, as base, mean, and treacherous."

"Regard it as you like," said Craven Black, airily, although his face flushed. "My dear child, you are beating against your bars like the bird in the cage to which I likened you. Don't waste your strength in this manner. Be reasonable and submit to the power of those who have right and strength upon their side."

Mrs. Black paused in her walk before Neva and said, vindictively, and even fiercely:

"That is what you will have to do, Neva—submit! We are stronger than you. I should think your conscience would reproach you for rebelling against me in this manner. Did not your father a score of times enjoin you in his letters to love and obey me? Did he not in his will enjoin you to cling to me, and be gentle and loving and obedient to my wishes? Is it thus you respect his wishes and memory?"

"Stop!" cried Neva, imperiously. "How dare you urge my father's wishes upon me? How dare you speak of respect to his memory, which you outraged at the time of your recent and third marriage, when you summoned my father's tenantry to a ball, and made merry in my father's house, thus virtually rejoicing in his death? I cannot hear my father's name from your lips, madam."

"Oh, you can't!" sneered Octavia Black.

"You will have to hear whatever I may choose to say of him; let me tell you that, Miss Neva. You may fling off your authority and your late father's together if you choose, but his last letter to you should be held sacred by you, and its injunctions fulfilled to the letter as sacred commands from the dead to the living."

"That last letter!" said Neva. "The letter written by Craven Black, with your assistance and connivance! Ah, you start. You see that I comprehend you at last—that I have fathomed your wickedness! That letter, now in the hands of Lord Towyn or Mr. Atkins or Sir John Freise, emanated from Craven Black's brain and hand. It was a clever forgery, but, thank Heaven, I know it to be a forgery! My father could never have so coolly and easily disposed of his daughter's future. He never wrote that letter!"

The girl spoke in a tone of such firm conviction, as if she knew what she affirmed was the truth, that the discomfited plotters made no attempt to deny her assertion.

The Blacks looked at each other darkly, and read in each other's eyes incitement to continue in their wickedness with unabated courage.

Mrs. Artress looked on, evilly exultant. She had never liked the heiress of Hawkhurst, with her dainty beauty, her piquant witchery of face and manner, and with all the wealth that seemed so boundless. Mrs. Artress was jealous, envious, and full of hatred of her, and her greed of money had been enlisted against the young girl.

There was a brief pause, during which Neva sat down, laying aside her muff and dressing-bag. Presently she said:

"I understand you now, as you know. I trust that you understand me. I will not trouble you to deal more in subterfuges and deceptions. I comprehend that I have been decoyed here for a purpose, and that I am now your prisoner. What is your purpose against me?"

"We have no purpose against you, Neva," said Octavia Black, quite calmly, and even pleasantly. "You deceive yourself. We saw you anxious to plunge into marriage with Lord Towyn, but, disapproving the match, I have brought you here. I stand in the relation of a parent to you, and use a parent's authority, as I have a right. I have other designs for you. A worthy and accomplished young man, the son of my present husband, has solicited your hand in marriage, and I am anxious that you should enter the same family with myself. We will not coerce you; but I am sure, after a residence more or less prolonged at this Wilderness, you will be glad to marry Rufus Black and go back into society. You shall have sufficient time for consideration. I am ready to sacrifice myself and remain here all the winter, if necessary to bring you to the desired view of the subject."

"One thing we may as well make plain," said Craven Black, deliberately. "When you leave this house, Miss Wynde, it will beas the promised bride of my son."

Neva's eyes flashed mutiny.

"Is Rufus Black a party to this scheme?" she demanded.

"No," said Mr. Black, promptly. "He knows nothing of my designs. I have told him to hope that you will relent, and he thinks that his step-mother has unbounded influence over you, which she will use in his behalf. Rufus is a poor, weak young fellow, with all his desirable qualities, and he would sooner cut his throat than force you into a marriage with him. No; Rufus is at Hawkhurst, where I have ordered him to remain until our return, or until he hears from me. He supposes us to be in Yorkshire. We are ready to start for your home with you any day when you shall have given us your oath that this visit to the Highlands shall be kept secret by you, and that you will marry Rufus on your return to Hawkhurst. These are our terms."

"I have said upon what terms I am willing to keep your villainy secret," said Neva, haughtily. "My condition is that I am immediately allowed to go free. I shall not repeat that offer after tonight. I shall never agree to your terms. I shall never marry Rufus Black. I am betrothed to a noble and honourable gentleman, and I regard my promise to him as sacred as any oath. In short, Mr. and Mrs. Craven Black, I will stay here until I die before I will yield to your dominion or perjure myself by a cowardly oath."

"Very well," said Black. "It only remains to see which will hold out the longest, besiegers or besieged. Octavia, let us go. A night of reflection may bring our young lady to terms."

"I have a last word to say," exclaimed Neva, arising, her young face full of a bitter and passionate rebellion against her enemies. "You have not fairly counted the cost of your present undertaking, Mr. and Mrs. Black. The heiress of Hawkhurst, the betrothed wife of one of the wealthiest young noblemen of Great Britain, cannot disappear in a manner so mysterious without exciting attention. I shall be sought after far and wide. My three guardians will set the officers of the law upon my track. Even now it is quite possible my friends may be on their way to this place. I shall be rescued from your hands, and you will be rewarded with the punishment and the ignominy you deserve."

"You believe all this?" cried Craven Black. "You think I am clumsy enough to permit myself to be tracked? How little you know me! I defy all the detectives in the world to trace me. I did not buy the yacht. A friend bought it in his own name, and provisioned it. The three sailors on board of the yacht will never see a newspaper, will not stir out of the loch, and will see no one. I have attached them to me by a free use of money, and I have a hold upon them in knowing their past. If the officers of the law were to trace you to the loch below us the men would not dare to reveal your whereabouts for fear of being held as conspirators against your liberty. The two women servants in this house never stir off the plateau. The cabman I hired to convey us from the London railway station to Gravesend, I discovered in my conversation with him, was employed for that day alone to take the place of the cabman who was ill. The fellow told me he was a navy, bound for a voyage the next day, and he wished he could sail our yacht instead of going out to Australia in a steamer. You see how my tracks are covered? Your help must come from yourself, not from Lord Towyn. I have no more to say at present. If you choose to come to terms you can send Celeste to my wife at any moment. Permit me to wish you good-night."

He approached her as if to shake hands. Neva gathered up her effects and retreated into her room. The next instant a key was inserted in the lock, and the bolt was shot home. Neva was in truth a prisoner.

"Celeste, you will occupy this room," said Mrs. Black, to her maid, "and you must sleep with me

eye open. Miss Wynde is desperate, and may attempt to pick the lock or to escape by one of her windows."

"I am not afraid of pursuit," said Mr. Black, meditatively, "but I would like to throw the pursuers upon a wrong scent. I wish I could get Lord Town over upon the Continent, with that sharp-eyed Atkins. How can we contrive to give them the impression that we have gone on a Continental tour?"

They pondered the question for many minutes.

"I have it," said Celeste, at last. "I have a sister who lives in Brussels; she works in a milliner's shop in the Rue Montagne de la Cour. You shall write a letter for mademoiselle, Mr. Black, in her very handwriting, and date the letter Brussels, and I will send it under cover to my sister, to be posted at Brussels. Yes, my faith, we have it. One of the sailors shall post my letter, with its enclosure, from Inverness. It is well, is it not?"

The plan suited Mr. and Mrs. Black, who resolved to act upon it. The whole party adjourned to the drawing-room. Mrs. Craven Black brought forth several letters she had formerly received from Neva while at the Paris school, and had preserved for possible use. Mr. Black still retained the envelope to the letter Neva had addressed to her lover, which he had intercepted. With these materials, and his skill at counterfeiting, Craven Black set to work to write a letter in Neva's name, and dated at Brussels. While he was thus engaged, Mrs. Black supplying him with suitable paper and ink, the French maid wrote to her sister at Brussels, requesting her to stamp and forward the enclosed missive. Octavia Black gave her attendant a Bank of England note to enclose in payment of the service.

The double letter was finished and sealed that night, and Craven Black went to Inverness the next day in the yacht and posted it.

This then was the letter which had been brought up to London to Lord Town by his steward, and the young earl, having read it, had so instantly and vehemently pronounced a forgery.

But though it failed of its object, and did not deceive the keen-witted young lover as to its origin, it did not enlighten him as to Neva's whereabouts. He continued his search for her, calling in the aid of professional detectives, Mr. Atkins devoting his time also to the search, but they failed to find a clue to the missing young girl. And she, hidden in the far-off Scottish wilds, among mountain peaks and in a secluded rocky wilderness, looked in vain for her lover's coming. Her enemies were indeed more cunning than she had dreamed, and it seemed indeed as if the words of Craven Black would prove true, and the matter between the "besiegers and the besieged" would become a question of resistance. Which would be the first to yield to the loneliness and gloom of the Wilderness and to the rigours of the swiftly approaching Highland winter?

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE sudden death of Mrs. Wroat proved a severe shock to poor Lally Bird, who had grown to love the eccentric but kind-hearted old lady with a daughter's affection. She hurriedly dressed herself, and came down to Mrs. Wroat's chamber, pale and awe-struck, with a horrible sense of desolation and misery. It seemed as if a fatality attended her—that those whom she loved were in some way doomed. Her parents were dead, her young husband had been taken from her, and now her great-aunt had died, and she was again alone. She was not selfish in her grief, but she could not help thinking of her own bitter loneliness as she bent over the still figure and softly and reverently touched the straying locks of gray hair and pressed her lips to the shrivelled mouth from which the angel smile seemed slowly fading.

Peters had by this time regained her self-command. There was much to do, and it devolved upon her to do it. Her tears must wait for a more convenient season. She was anxious that "all things should be done decently and in order," and that due respect should be given to the dead mistress she had so loved. Her first act then, after arousing Lally and the servants, was to despatch the footman to the family physician and to Mr. Harris, Mrs. Wroat's lawyer.

The physician came first. He showed no surprise at the summons, and acknowledged to Peters that he had expected it before. He could only confirm the discovery of Peters that the old lady was dead.

The lawyer arrived while the doctor was in the house. Mrs. Wroat had requested that Mr. Harris should assume control of her affairs after her death, and he proceeded to seal her desk and to take charge of her private papers, while he gave directions for the management of the household while the dead should remain in the house. An undertaker was sent for, and all the grim preparations for the sepulture, so terrible to surviving friends, were entered upon.

The next morning's papers contained the obituary notice of Mrs. Maria Wroat, relict of the late John

Wroat, banker, with a statement of her age and of the time appointed for the funeral.

The next afternoon brought to the door of the mansion in Mount Street a cab, from which alighted Mr. and Mrs. Blight, of Sandy Lands. They sounded the knocker pompously, ringing the bell at the same moment. The footman hastened to give them admittance.

"I see by the morning's papers that my dear aunt is dead, Toppen," said the Canterbury lawyer, who was known and detested by Mrs. Wroat's servants. "Why was I not informed of her dangerous illness?"

"Mrs. Wroat died sudden, sir," answered the man, respectfully.

"Why was I not telegraphed to immediately upon her death?"

"I don't know, sir. Mr. Harris, he manages the funeral, sir."

"Show us up to our room, Toppen. You are perhaps aware that I am the old lady's heir. I am the nephew of her deceased husband, who left her a good share of his property. It all comes to me. I shall continue to keep you in my service, Toppen, when I come up to town to live, which will be immediately. But come. Show us our room."

Toppen hesitated.

"Beg pardon, sir," he said, "but I'll just speak to Mrs. Peters. Miss Wroat, she can't be disturbed, and I don't know which room exactly Mrs. Peters intends for you."

"The amber room, of course," said Mrs. Blight, superciliously. "We shall have the best room in the house, whatever Mrs. Peters or any one else may say."

"Miss Wroat has the amber room," said Toppen.

"Miss Wroat!" repeated the lawyer. "And who may Miss Wroat be?"

"She is Mrs. Wroat's young niece, sir; that she fetched home with her from Canterbury. The missus said we were to call the young lady Miss Wroat. If you'll walk into the drawing-room I'll go for Mrs. Peters."

The Blights went into the drawing-room as desired, and there awaited Mrs. Peters's appearance with outward bravado and some inward anxiety.

"You don't suppose the old woman can have made a will giving Lally Bird her fortune?" whispered the Canterbury lawyer's wife.

"No. I think she went off so suddenly at the last that she had no time to make a will. But if she did make one I stand as good a chance as any one of inheriting her money, even after all that has come and gone between her and us. Her money came from her husband, who was my uncle. The old woman had a stern sense of justice, and she would never have left her entire fortune away from her husband's nephew, who had, as one may say, a claim upon it. No doubt she left her great-niece a legacy, but you'll find that we come in for the best share of her money."

Mr. Blight did not reflect that Mrs. Wroat's "stern sense of justice" might cause her to leave her money away from him instead of leaving it to him.

"No matter whether she leaves the girl fifty pounds a year or two hundred pounds a year," said Mrs. Blight, venomously, "she shall go out of this house on the day after the funeral, bag and baggage, the artful jade! I won't have her under my roof a night longer than I can help."

"Quite right, Laura. We should have had the whole pile only for her."

"I shall furnish the whole house new," said Mrs. Blight, reflectively. "Aunt Wroat had abominable taste, and the colours here quite ruin my complexion. Why don't Peters or the housekeeper come? I shall discharge Peters—"

The last words were overheard by Peters herself, who appeared in list slippers and a black gown, staid, angular, and sour-visaged as usual, with a warm heart nearly bursting with grief under her prim bodice. She courtesied to the self-invited guests, her lips tightly compressed, and an ominous gleam in her tear-blurred eyes.

"Ah, Peters at last!" said Mrs. Blight, condescendingly. "We want to go up to our room, Peters, before we see the remains of our dear aunt. Why were we not sent for yesterday, Peters?"

"I suppose Mr. Harris forgot to telegraph to you," said Peters, grimly. "He spoke of doing so. Your room is ready, and I'll send Buttons up to show you the way."

"Toppen calls Miss Bird Miss Wroat—ha, ha!" laughed the Canterbury lawyer. "A queer idea, isn't it, Peters? Does the girl call herself Miss Wroat?"

Peters bowed.

"It was my lady's wish," she said.

"Ah, yes," said Mr. Blight. "By-the-bye, Peters, here's a sovereign for you. I always admired your sturdy independence, Peters. My aunt loved you, ah, like a sister, and leaned upon you, and all that, Peters. I hope she has remembered you at last. It would be a pity if she had not left some trifles to

mark her appreciation of your fidelity and affection."

"I have no fault to find," said Peters, coldly, rejecting the coin. "My dear lady remembered me generously in her will—"

"Her will?" interrupted Mr. Blight, eagerly. "She did make a will then? I am glad to hear it. Had she died without a will Miss Bird and Mrs. Wroat's other relatives would have divided the Wroat property and fattened upon it. As it is I am sure Mrs. Wroat has done me justice. She would not have remembered any faults of ours in her dying hour, but would have seen to it that Mr. Wroat's nephew had his proper share in Mr. Wroat's property. I suppose you know the purport of the will?"

Peters bowed assent.

"I shouldn't mind a matter of five pounds," said Mr. Blight, insinuatingly. "I should like to know if my poor aunt did justice to me in her last moments."

"I don't want your money, Mr. Blight," said Peters, "but if you are anxious to know I will tell you that Mrs. Wroat did you justice in her will. That is all that I will say. I am not at liberty to betray the contents of the will, which will be read immediately after the burial."

The countenances of the two fortune hunters glowed with delight. They interpreted Mrs. Peters's words to suit themselves.

Mrs. Peters gave them no time for farther questioning. She summoned the boot-boy, and ordered him to conduct the guests to their chamber, then departed to the room where her dead mistress was lying.

The boy led the way upstairs, Mr. and Mrs. Blight following, and ushered them into the red room, opposite Lally's apartment, and next in beauty and convenience to Lally's rooms.

"Peters goes out of this house when Miss Bird goes!" cried Mrs. Blight, sinking into a chair and puffing heavily. "Charles, I believe I shall take the old lady's room for mine, and save coming upstairs; it will be so convenient. You must run out a new dressing-room and bath-room; those downstairs don't suit me at all. Aunt Wroat's personal tastes were so horribly plain. I shall clear out all the present servants. I know that Toppen hates us both, but he was forced to be civil to the heir, you know. By the way, we must have mourning clothes, Charles. You must write to your tailor to send a man to take your measure immediately, and I will drop a note to Jay's, and have them send a complete mourning outfit and a dressmaker to me."

The notes were written in Mr. Blight's most grandiloquent style, and, although they were brief, they betrayed the complacency of a satisfied heir in every line.

The tailor and dressmaker arrived in due time, and Mrs. Blight discussed ribbons and shades of silk and the respective merits of French and English crêpe upstairs, while the old lady was being robed for the grave below, and Lally lay upon her own bed, weeping as though her heart were breaking.

Lally kept to her own room until after the funeral. She could neither eat nor sleep. Etiquette forbade her attending her deceased relative to the grave, but she watched the departure of the funeral train from her window, her eyes almost blinded with her tears.

After the funeral Mr. Blight and Mr. Harris, the lawyer, returned to the mansion in Mount Street, and the latter summoned Mrs. Blight, Lally, and Peters, to hear the will read.

Mrs. Blight swept in, clad in the deepest mourning, her garments covered deep with crêpe, black-bordered handkerchief held at her eyes. Mr. Blight placed an arm chair for her near the hearth, the October day being chilly, and took a seat at her side with quite an air of proprietorship of the house.

Lally, in deep mourning, came next, with the faithful Peters, also in mourning habiliments. Mr. Harris placed a chair for Lally, and Peters sat near her young mistress, to whose service she intended to devote herself.

Mr. Harris then, with preparatory clearings of his throat, read the will. It commenced by declaring the testator of sound mind, being the usual formula, and proceeded with an enumeration of property at which the Blights grew inwardly radiant.

"All this, my real and personal property," read Mr. Harris, in effect, "I give and bequeath, absolutely and without reserve, to—my beloved great-niece, Lalla Bird, the daughter of John Bird and Clara Mulford Percy, his wife, to her and to her heirs and assigns for ever."

The Blights gasped for breath.

Lally's countenance did not change. She knew that her days of poverty were over; that she would never again wander shelterless and forlorn, glad to find shelter at night in a barn, and famished for food.

All that distress for her was for ever past. Her comfort and prosperity had been secured by the

tenderness of her kindly and eccentric old relative, but Lally would willingly have gone back to her old-time poverty and toil if by so doing she might have recalled her good friend from her grave.

"I say, this is simply infamous!" gasped Mr. Blight, turning upon Mr. Harris fiercely. "Infamous, sir! Do you know whose money, sir, this wretched old dotard has willed away so lightly? I'll tell you, sir. It was my late uncle's. It should be mine—and by Heaven it shall be mine. I'll appeal to the law. I'll contest the will."

"Are you a lawyer? Why do you talk so childishly?" demanded Mr. Harris. "The property of which Mrs. Wroat has disposed was hers absolutely, to dispose of as she pleased. If your late uncle had wished to provide for you he would have done so. You are no relative of Mrs. Wroat, and you ought to know that if you contest the will you won't get a penny. The girl would have it just the same—at least a portion of it—even if you succeeded in breaking the will, which you can't."

"Mrs. Wroat was indisputably in sound mind when she dictated that will. Under any circumstances, Mr. Blight, you can get nothing. With the exception of an annuity to be paid out of the income to Peters during her life-time, the remainder of the property is absolutely Miss Bird's—or Miss Wroat's as it was the wish of our deceased friend that the young lady should be called."

Mr. Blight silently recognized the truth of these words. He had been left out in the cold, and he was angry, disappointed, infuriated.

"Oh, my new and expensive mourning!" said Mrs. Blight, spitefully. "I wouldn't have put on black for the old creature if I had known the truth. Peters ought to pay me the hundred pounds I have expended. I shall sell every black rag I bought!"

Lally arose to retire, and Mr. Harris and Peters attended her from the room. Mr. Harris presently returned, and said, gravely:

"Miss Wroat is fatigued, and Mrs. Peters thinks her unequal to the task of entertaining guests. At the request of Mrs. Peters, therefore, I have to suggest, sir and madam, that you will take your leave without again seeing Miss Wroat. I will remain to do the honours of the house, in Miss Wroat's stead, at your departure."

Mr. and Mrs. Blight, thus quietly dismissed, returned to their room and packed their effects. An hour later their cab was announced, and they came downstairs, the lady leaning on her husband's arm and weeping with rage.

As they sat in the cab, the luggage piled on top, and slowly departed from the house where they had hoped to reign, Mrs. Blight looked back sobbing in her anguish.

"It might have been ours but for the artful mix-up in as it were out of the streets. I'll never do a good notion again in all my life—never. Now I must go back to poverty, and scrimp to save what I've spent in mourning, and we and our poor dear lambs may go to the union, while that treacherous cat Lally Bird lolls in wealth. Oh, dear! Oh, dear!"

(To be continued.)

SIAMESE is now recognized by the Foreign Office, as well as Chinese and Japanese. There are now student interpreters for the Siamese Department.

SUN-SPOTS.—The number of groups of sun-spots observed in 1871 at the Kew Observatory were 271. This is fewer than those observed in 1870; so that we may infer that the descent towards the minimum number will be regular, as in former years. Messrs. De La Rue, Stewart, and Loewy have communicated these results to the Royal Astronomical Society. The solar surface during the year has been marked by evidences of considerable disturbance, and especially violent convulsions.

THE MOUTH OF THE NILE.—M. Laroussse, a French hydrographic engineer, has presented to the French Academy of Sciences a paper on the mouths of the Nile, and the changes which have taken place in them during the last two centuries. The Damietta and Rosetta mouths have advanced, and are advancing, into the sea at the rate of three metres and 35 per annum respectively. M. Laroussse thinks that the mouth of the Suez Canal in the Mediterranean may be maintained at the necessary depth without any excessive cost.

SHOCKING PRACTICAL JOKE.—An electrical innovation agitates certain Sacramento loungers, and its operation is thus chronicled by the *Bea* of that city:—The authorities at the telegraph office in the passenger dépôt have conceived and carried into effect a very happy idea of affording a cheap and effectual amusement to loungers therabouts. A box running the full length of the front of the office on the outside has hitherto furnished a tempting seat for the *habitues*. This has been covered with zinc, which has been connected with the batteries that are contained in the box. A person sitting upon the box without touching his hands thereto will not feel the electricity, but,

if his hands drop on the box, or he puts them thereon to assist him in rising, he receives such a sudden and astonishing shock as sends him an unbelievable number of feet towards the lofty roof and the adjacent lightning, describing a fifty-foot parabola in the air. Inside the office an almost imperceptible wire conducts the electricity into the iron handles of a spacious arm-chair. A large gentleman sat down therein the other day, and, leaning luxuriously back, he laid his hands upon the arms, and in that very instant he was astounded at finding himself trying to butt a hole through the ceiling.

MYSTERY OF THE HAUNTED GRANGE.

CHAPTER XLIV.

PAULINA caught her breath; she arose and looked at Guy, flushed, eager.

"Hero!" she cried, "here! my father! at last! Oh, Mr. EarlsCourt, where is he?—take me to him!—at once! at once!"

"Restrain yourself, Miss Lisle—at once would be impossible. His presence here must for a time be a dead secret. Above all, Sir Vane Charteris and his family are to be kept in total ignorance. He had me give you this—it explains everything, and tells you where to find him. Conceal it quickly—here is Mrs. Galbraith."

She thrust the letter he gave her into the folds of her dress just in time to escape the observation of Mrs. Galbraith's keen black eyes. As on that other night she came noiselessly upon them—this time—with a bland smile on her face.

"Ah, Mr. EarlsCourt!—so happy to welcome you back. Such a surprise, Paulina, love, is it not? a celebrated author, and hero, and everything. Everybody is talking of you and your books, I assure you."

"Everybody does me too much honour, Mrs. Galbraith. Miss Lisle, adieu."

He bowed with his old negligent, courtly grace, his old careless smile, and sauntered away. Paulina looked, with an inexplicable expression, after the tall, graceful form, and saw the daughter of the house, Lady Edith Clive, flutter smilingly up to him, with both hands outstretched in glad welcome.

Paulina turned abruptly away, and looked no more.

"Mrs. Galbraith," she said, "I want to go home."

"Certainly, Paulina, love—but where is Lord Heatherland?"

"Gone long ago. Order the carriage at once, I am tired to death of it all."

Mrs. Galbraith looked at her in astonishment. What was the matter? Whither and why had the Marquis of Heatherland gone, and what meant all this unusual angry impatience?

Sir Vane came up at the moment, his ruddy face a shade or two less florid than usual, and his small black eyes looking strangely startled.

"Paulina!" he exclaimed, in a half-whisper, "do you know who has come?"

"Yes, I know."

"But, good Heaven, Paulina, what is to be done? You showed me the paper that spoke of him as dead, and now here he is back again. There is Lord Heatherland, and the settlements are prepared, and the wedding-day named. Paulina, what is to be done?"

"Go home, the first thing," she replied, with an hysterical laugh. "Let me alone, Sir Vane Charteris; I am not fit to talk to you or any one to-night."

He looked at her, and noticed, for the first time, the ghastly pallor of her face, the dusky fire in her eyes. He gave her his arm, without another word, and led her to the carriage. On the way home not a syllable was spoken.

Mrs. Galbraith sat in silent surprise, but asking no questions.

Maud lay back half asleep—Sir Vane kept inwardly repeating:

"What will she do?"

Paulina, in a corner of the carriage, sat white and cold, with only a dull, aching sense of misery in her heart. Her father had come—was here! At any other time those tidings would have driven her half frantic with delight, but even this news had little power to move her now.

They reached home.

She toiled wearily up the stairs to her own luxurious apartments. Her French maid, English Joe's successor, sat waiting for her young mistress, half asleep in a chair.

Paulina dismissed her at once.

"You may go to bed, Odille—I shall not want you this morning."

The girl departed yawning.

The moment she had gone Paulina locked the doors, drew a chair close to the wax lights, and took from the corsage of her dress the letter Guy Earls-

court had given her. She knew that bold, manly hand well; she tore it impetuously open and read its brief contents:

"CHARING CROSS HOTEL,

"Tuesday, May 11, 1869.

"**MY PAULINA**,—You see I have answered you, prayer at last—I am here—here to redress the wrongs of the living—or to avenge the dead—here after two-and-twenty years to reclaim your mother—my wife."

"My young friend Guy EarlsCourt has persuaded me, convinced me that this way lies my duty. He has urged me also to tell you all, and claim your woman's wit and aid in my undertaking."

"The hour has come when it is time for you to learn who your mother really is—that you have been kept in ignorance so long may have been a fatal mistake. My daughter, have you never suspected? You have met her; known her. Think! Shall I tell you her name at once?"

"Paulina; she whom you knew as Lady Charteris was Olivia Lyndith five-and-twenty years ago, Robert Lisle's wife, and your mother."

The letter dropped from Paulina's hand with a low, startled cry.

A thousand things rushed on her memory to convince her of the truth of her father's words. The night in Lyndith Grange, where my lady had kissed and cried over her, the midnight visit to Duke's cottage, and, above all, a vague, intangible something that had always drawn her to the unhappy lady. How stupid, how blind she had been not to guess the truth before!

"I never knew until a few months ago," the letter went on, "the terrible fact that she was not insane when shut up in a madhouse." Mr. EarlsCourt told me. I have returned, at the earliest possible moment, and I will never rest until I have found, have reclaimed her. Heaven be merciful to human error, I may be too late to save her, but I meant it for the best.

"You will come to me here—I long to see you, my darling—my Olivia's child."

"You will ask for Mr. Hawkesley, and you will keep the fact of my presence in England a dead secret. Do not, in any way, show Sir Vane Charteris that you suspect or know the truth. We must be subtle as serpents in dealing with a serpent. Mr. EarlsCourt goes to the Countess of Damar's ball to give you this to-night. To-morrow, at the earliest possible hour, I shall expect you here. Until I see you, my own dear child, adieu."

She knew all at last—at last. The secret that for the past eight years had been the unfathomable mystery of her life was solved. Her mother was found.

The reading of the letter had calmed her. She held it to the lighted tapes and watched it burn to ashes. Then she extinguished them.

The rosy dawn of the sweet May day was lighting the East already as she drew back the curtains of silk and lace and flung the casements open. The fresh, cool air blew in like a benediction on her hot and throbbing head. What a night the past one had been—how a few hours had changed her whole life. A year seemed to have elapsed since yesterday—since yesterday when she stood here with Lord Heatherland's ring on her finger and trills of song upon her lips. The flashing diamond was not there now, only a plain circlet of gold on the third finger of her left hand, and the opal ring Duke had given her long ago remained. She was peculiar in many things—in this that she rarely wore jewels of any kind. She looked now at that shining wedding-ring—strange that she had always worn that—and her thoughts reverted back to him, to herself.

"Why had he returned?" she thought, "and how will it end? He scorns and despises me—how can he do otherwise? What is my life to be bound to him and held apart from him by that very tie of marriage? And I thought I could have left England and him for ever, and now a new duty holds me here. Well, duty before any selfish interest of my own. I will remain—I will help my father—my mother shall be found, and then—and then the sooner I pass away from the world's ken and disappear the better. My life has been all a mistake, and my own folly alone is to be blamed. I must remain here and play my part for the present, go into society, and bear the world's insolent wonder at my broken engagement—worse than that, meet him there, and treat him as I treated him last night."

She laid her head against the cold glass with a long, tired sigh. What a travestied world it was—how little life seemed worth the living just then. The sun arose, another busy day had begun for the great city, and Paulina Lisle in her floating satin and laces and diamonds sat there pale and spiritless—utterly worn out.

The breakfast-bell rang. She began slowly unclasping the jewels, unloosing her rich dress. Then she threw on a dressing-gown and rang for her maid.

"Clear away those things, Odille, and bring me a cup of tea."

The girl, with the nimble fingers of her craft, put away the ball-robe, placed the diamonds in their case, and brought up Miss Lisle's breakfast.

With an effort she swallowed a few mouthfuls, drank the tea, and then pushed aside the scarcely tasted meal.

"Dress me for the street, Odille, and be quick. I am going for a walk if Mrs. Galbraith should inquire for me you can tell her so."

Odille unbound the shining tresses, and built up her young lady's coquetry with practised rapidity. In fifteen minutes Miss Lisle stood attired in a walking costume of quiet gray, a close veil over her face. It was no unusual thing for Paulina to start for a brisk morning walk at the hour when all fashionable people were asleep, and Odille was in no way surprised.

It was just eleven as she hailed a cab and gave the order to the driver:

"Charing Cross Hotel."

Her heart throbbed with fearful rapidity as the hansom flew along the streets.

At last—at last—in ten minutes she would be face to face with her father!

CHAPTER XLV.

In his room at the Charing Cross Hotel Robert Hawksley sat alone by the open window, smoking his meerschaum and waiting for his daughter's coming with that grave patience that long habit had made second nature.

Crowds passed to and fro on the pavement below, the bright May sunshine gilding every face.

Very fresh those rose-and-white English faces looked in the clear light; how thoroughly English the women were, with their bright bloom—their fair skin.

He had seen hundreds of American women in Northern cities, with their delicate, wax-like beauty, their Parisian dresses and gay Parisian manners, and had admired them from afar off, but here he felt as though he had brothers and sisters and home.

Why had he not braved the worst and returned long ago? He wondered at himself now as he looked back.

Why had he not defied all their treachery and baseness, and torn that day, at the very altar, his wife from Sir Vane Charteris's arms?

"Is it fate?" he thought. "Is our path beaten for us at our birth, and must we walk straight along willy-nilly to the appointed end? In a few moments I shall see my daughter—mine—I who for nearly five-and-twenty years have been a houseless, friendless, solitary man; and perhaps find her—in spite of her letters, in spite of all I have heard—cold and selfish and worldly."

There was a tap at the door at the moment, and a waiter entered.

"A lady to see Mr. Hawksley," he announced.

Then a stately figure appeared close behind him, veiled and simply dressed, but looking a "lady" from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot.

The waiter disappeared, closing the door behind him.

Robert Hawksley arose, laying down his pipe; the lady flung back her veil, and father and daughter stood face to face.

For the space of five seconds they stood in dead silence looking at each other.

She saw a man bronzed and weather-beaten, but handsomer and nobler it seemed to her than any other man she had ever known—save one.

He saw a beautiful and gracefully young lady, with soft sapphire eyes and gold-brown hair rippling low over that broad, white brow, with sweet, sensitive lips, and a little curved, spirited chin.

They were strikingly alike too—eyes, hair, features—the most casual observer might have told the relationship.

He smiled—a smile of great content passed over Colonel Hawksley's bearded lips—and he came forward with both hands outstretched.

"Paulina! my daughter!"

He drew her to him and kissed the pure white brow, and the first meeting was over without scenes or exclamations.

I suppose it is only on the stage new-found relatives fling themselves into each other's arms with ecstatic screams. In real life, when we feel deeply, our actions and words are apt to be quiet and commonplace in exact proportion.

She took the seat he offered her, away from the window, and waited for him to speak.

On all ordinary occasions Miss Lisle was never at a loss for plenty to say for herself, but just now her lips were quivering and her heart was full and no words came.

(Continued on p. 61)

He was the more composed and self-possessed of the two.

"EarlsCourt gave you my letter?" he inquired. She started with a sort of shock that that name should be almost the first word from his lips. "What a surprise it must have been to you!"

"A very great—a very glad surprise. I can only regret you did not tell me all long ago," she rejoined.

"What good would it have done?" asked the colonel.

"This!" she said, her eyes firing up, "that Sir Vane Charteris should never have shut my mother up in a madhouse. By some means or other I would have rescued her long ago."

"Were you much surprised when you heard your mother's name?"

"No, I think not, yet I never suspected. How strange—how strange it all is! I never saw much of her, but I liked her exceedingly. To think that Sir Vane Charteris knew that I was her daughter all those years."

"How has he treated you, Paulina—harshly?"

Miss Lisle lifted her imperial head with a haughty gesture.

"He dare not! I would endure harshness from no guardian alive. In one instance only did he ever try to coerce me, and I baffled him in that."

Her face glowed over as she spoke. Had not that instance in which she had baffled him embittered her whole life?

"He did!" her father said; "your letters never told me, Paulina."

"No," she replied, with a sigh; "of what use would it have been? You could not have helped me. I fought my own battle—and won."

"I wished you to marry some one he had chosen for you—for your fortune, no doubt?"

"He wished me to marry Lord Montalison. From what motive I do not know. Lord Montalison, with fifteen thousand a year of his own, could scarcely wish to marry me for my fortune."

"Lord Montalison! What Guy's elder brother?"

"Mr. EarlsCourt's elder brother."

Robert Hawksley looked at her searchingly. The proud, pale face, very soft and sweet a moment since, had grown hard and set at the memory of that past time.

"You would not? You did not care for him?"

"I not only did not care for him—one might go over that—I hated him. I believed him to have wronged a friend I loved very dearly—I would have died a thousand times sooner than marry him."

He was watching her still—a grave smile upon his face.

"I wonder if that hatred extends to Guy? I hope not, for I have grown as fond of him as though he were my own son."

Her face flushed all over—a deep, painful, burning red.

"I have no reason to dislike Mr. EarlsCourt," she answered, the words coming with an effort; "he did me a great service once—a service few men would have rendered."

"You must have been equally astonished and delighted when he appeared so suddenly before you last night at the Countess of Damar's ball."

"Very much surprised, beyond a doubt, since I thought him dead. Do you not know that his death was announced many months ago in one of the papers you sent me?"

"I did not know it. You really thought him dead until he appeared like a ghost before you! Not that Guy much resembles a ghost at present. It was as close a thing as ever I saw—he had half a hundred wounds, and fought through the campaign like iron."

It was while he lay in the hospital, almost at death's door, that I found your picture in a locket attached to his watch-chain, and discovered that he knew you; and I was a companion."

That deep flush rose up once more on Paulina's fair face.

"My picture!" she said. "How came he by that? I certainly never gave it to him."

"He told me as much afterwards—owned that he purchased it as a souvenir of England, and you to carry into his exile. Ah, he is a brave lad, and a gallant one. He saved my life once at the risk of his own."

"Tell me about it, father."

Her voice was strangely soft and tremulous—her face drooped forward on her father's shoulder, something vague and sweet stirring in her heart. It was a theme Robert Hawksley liked well—the young man had grown as dear to him as a son. He told her, while the moments went by, stories of his bravery, of his generosity, of his genius, of his irreproachable life, of how nobly he had redeemed the past.

"I believe, at the worst, his greatest crimes were but the thoughtless follies of youth. Guy EarlsCourt has the noblest nature of any man I know. He could

not stoop to do a mean or dastardly thing. His comrades idolized him, his officers respected him. I believe he is a true genius, and destined to make a shining mark in the literature of his day."

An interval of silence followed—his daughter's face was still hidden, but it was to hide the tears that were falling now.

And this was the man she thought capable of selling his manhood for her money—the man who had sacrificed his life to save her from his brother!

"I don't see the need of our spending the first hour of our meeting in talking altogether of EarlsCourt, fine fellow though he is. It strikes me I should like to hear something of yourself."

She lifted her face and laughed a little bitterly.

"A most unprofitable subject. I am a fashionable lady, wrapped up in dressing, dancing, driving—rather a striking contrast to the sort of life you have been speaking of."

"And engaged to the Marquis of Heatherland?"

"No."

"No? Why, I saw it announced—"

"Very likely—still even the press is not infallible. Such an engagement did exist, but it has ceased."

"It has ceased? May I ask since when?"

She finished a little under his grave, steady, kindly, eyes.

"Since last night."

"Did you love Lord Heatherland, my daughter? The world speaks well of him."

"He deserves all the world can say—he is one of the best men I ever knew. But—I never loved him. I don't know that I ever loved any one—that I am capable of it. I am hard, and selfish, and worldly, and ambitious, and all evil things—unworthy to be any good man's wife. I shall never marry—you need not look at me in that way—I mean it. My engagement with Lord Heatherland has ceased; what I am now I will go to my grave. When we had my mother—ah! why should we talk of anything but her?—we three will leave this London life, and all pertaining to it, and grow old in peace somewhere out of the world."

Her voice gave way in a sort of sob. Not capable of loving any one when she knew that she loved Guy EarlsCourt dearly—dearly, and that she had loved him from the first—ay, in the days when Allan Fane, the artist, had whiled away in her company that rosy summer eight years gone.

"Let us talk of my mother," she repeated. "What do you propose to do—how to find her?"

"The most skilled detectives of Scotland Yard must do that. Can you, living under the same roof with Sir Vane Charteris, throw no light on the place of her concealment?"

"I am afraid not; yet," Paulina said, thoughtfully, "perhaps I can. I have repeatedly asked him, and so has Maud—his own daughter, you know—to take us to see her, but his answer was invariably a refusal. It was no sight for young girls, he said. Once Maud told me, in confidence, she thought her mother was confined somewhere at Cheswick, in a private asylum there. At least it is a clue—you might follow it up."

"I will. If she is in England it should not be so hard to find her. My poor Olivia! what has she not suffered all her life long? Can anything in the future ever atone for her for the past?"

"Let us hope so, my father. If we can only find her I am quite sure we can make her happy. You are certain," she added, hesitatingly, "that Sir Vane Charteris cannot invalidate your marriage?"

"Quite certain—it is beyond dispute. I shall set detectives on the track at once, and remain quietly here to await events. Can you come to see me often, Paulina, or will it inconvenience you too much?"

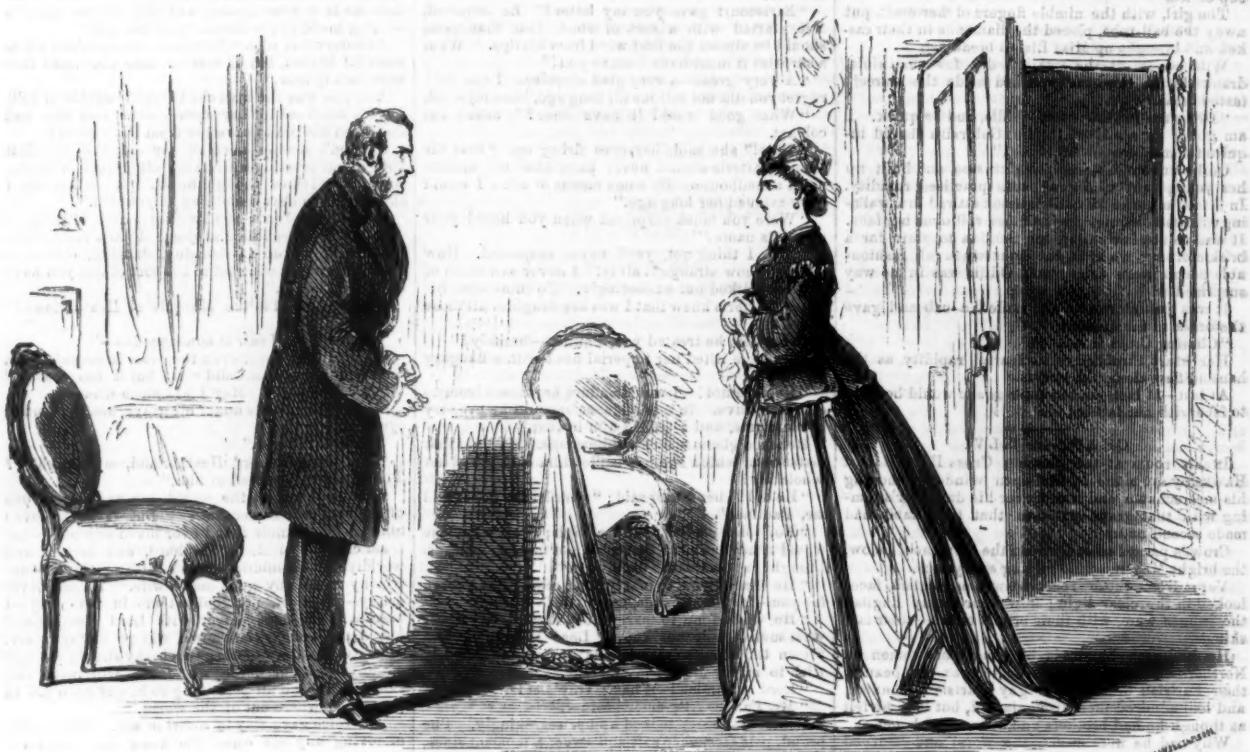
"I shall come to see you every day at this hour if you like. I am in every way my own mistress; free to come and go as I choose. And now, as it is getting late, I think I had better return. They might possibly be wondering what had become of me."

He led her to the door, and they parted with a hand-clasp. He was never demonstrative, and her relationship was new as yet to Paulina.

As she drew herself over her face and turned to descend the staircase Mr. EarlsCourt came auntering up, looking very handsomely in his careless morning costume. He removed his hat, bowed in silence, and passed on into the apartment of his friend.

Miss Lisle reached home in time for luncheon. There were always three or four droppers-in for the repast under the baronet's hospitable roof, and Paulina found the subject under discussion to be the unexpected return of Guy EarlsCourt.

"Lucky beggar! Always fell upon his feet, and writes books, and makes pots of money. Wish I could write books. All the women throwing themselves at his head already—Lady Edith Clive last night, and now you, Miss Charteris. Why couldn't the fellow stay where he was, and marry a Yankee?"



FATHER AND DAUGHTER FACE TO FACE.

Here's Miss Lisle; let's hear what she says. Miss Lisle, Miss Charteris says EarlsCourt's the handsomest man in London. Your taste is indisputable—what is your opinion?"

"Really, Mr. Challis, I have not thought sufficiently upon the subject to form an opinion. One cannot decide so important a question and award the palm of masculine beauty all in a moment."

"All in a moment!" exclaimed Maud. "Why, Paulina, you know Guy ages ago down in Lincolnshire, and when you first came out—or was it before you came out?—here in London. I'm sure last night you and he had quite an interesting conversation, to judge from your looks just before we left. Mr. Challis says Lady Edith Clive made love to him for the rest of the night."

"So she did," pursued Mr. Challis; "so the women always did, even when he was going straight to the dogs. So will you all—don't tell me—I know you. EarlsCourt's clever, and deucedly good looking, and the fashion, and may have his pick and choice before the season ends. He ought to go in for the Lady Edith—her fortune is something immense."

"Yes," said Mrs. Galbraith, "he's very handsome, and clever, and fascinating; he always was, and has just that sort of reputation which makes all romantic girls lose their heads at once. But, dear girl, don't either of you ever be mad enough to fall in love with a literary man. The wives of men of genius are the most miserable creatures under the sun. It is always the same story—private misery—public separation. The reason is plain enough. The affections of your men of great talent are not centred on wife and home, like those of common-place men. The painted canvas on their easel, the blotted manuscript in their desk, are nearer and dearer to them than wife or child. Marry a man without two ideas in his head, and his heart in the right place, and you will stand a better chance of happiness than with so brilliant a literary meteor as Guy EarlsCourt."

"Quite an eloquent speech, Aunt Eleanor," commented Maud, "and true, no doubt—though where your experience of men of genius comes from I don't know. Uncle Ralph was never overburdened with brains, from all I've heard of him. And, in spite of your warning, I think I should prefer a little mild melancholy as the wife of Mr. EarlsCourt to the perfect bliss you speak of with a man who has not two ideas in his head."

Her voice and face softened as she pronounced the name with a lingering tenderness, and a faint flush rose up in her pale face. Evidently it was a case of love at first sight.

Paulina's eyes flashed, and a resentful, jealous feeling came into her heart. What right had Maud Charteris to talk of being his wife?

"EarlsCourt will have none of you," said the young gentleman who had first appealed to Miss Lisle. "I met him at Fane's studio this morning—Fane, the artist, you know. Somebody chaffed him about the execution his beautiful eyes and last book had wrought with Lady Edith—she has been able to talk of nothing else since its publication. He laughed at first—then grew serious. 'It is nothing, of course,' he said; 'Lady Edith does me the honour to fancy my book, perhaps, but I wish it to be understood I am not going to marry. I am as much vowed to celibacy as though I wore the Templar's Cross. I shall marry no one.' And, by Jove! he said it, you know, as though he meant it."

Paulina's face flushed—her heart throbbed violently. Oh, what had she done?—what had she done?

"Yes," said Mrs. Galbraith, "Mr. EarlsCourt is a very clever man, and a reader of human nature. Such a declaration is all that is needed to throw over him a halo of mystery and romance, and make him simply irresistible. You don't speak, Paulina—what are you thinking of?"

"I am thinking how exceedingly kind it is of Mr. EarlsCourt to put us on our guard," Paulina answered, with that bitterness which was always in her tone when she spoke of Guy; "he is such a dazzling light that we all, poor moths, must inevitably be scorched to death if he had not warned us away. I suppose your hero is no more concealed than most men, Maud, he only shows it a little more plainly. Why not advertise at once in the papers: 'The ladies of England are hereby warned not to bestow their affections upon the undersigned, as he is quite unable to reciprocate them, and intends to make none of them happy by the offer of his heart and hand?'"

She arose as she spoke, angry at herself for the vehemence with which she had spoken.

"How do you hate him, Paulina, dear, don't you?" said Maud. "He never jilted you, did he? At Mrs. Atcherly's, for instance, six years ago, when you and he were surprised together in the ante-room, and poor auntie here was so angry?"

The random shot went straight home. Paulina turned of a dead whiteness from brow to chin. She tried to reply, but her voice failed. The others looked at her in surprise.

"He did jilt you then!" Maud would have liked to say, but she was afraid.

There was that when she was moved in Miss Lisle's face that always awed Miss Charteris.

There was a little, very awkward pause, then Sir Vane came in, and the conversation turned upon something else, Paulina quietly leaving the room.

Maud's suspicions were aroused; and from that hour she determined to watch Paulina and Guy EarlsCourt when they met, which they did night after night and day after day now, and jealousy had made the small black eyes sharp-sighted.

It was love at first sight with poor Maud. The dusky splendour of Guy's dark face, his tall, graceful figure, his reputation as a hero out there in America—all had dazzled and won her. Long ago he had been fond of her—good to her down at Montalieu; if there were nothing between Paulina and him surely she might hope.

Mr. EarlsCourt had made up his mind not to re-enter society upon his return to London. He had discovered how hollow and empty it all was—he had learned a healthier kind of life in the past six years. But he found himself quite a "lion," the hero of the day; society sought him—crowds of invitations poured in upon him from the highest in the land. Many were old friends whom he could not well refuse, so he said to himself, half ashamed of his yielding—but was that solely the reason?

Wherever he went he saw the proud, beautiful face of the girl who was his wife. His wife! What a pang—half pain, half remorse—it gave him!

He should not have taken advantage of that hour of madness, he thought, when she had besought him to save her—when carried away by the excitement of the private theatricals she had become his wife. It was blighting her life he could see. She hated him, and took little pains to conceal it.

Night after night he left those gay assemblies where she shone a queen by right divine of her peerless beauty and grace, vowing in his passion never to return; yet when to-morrow came the temptation to look once more upon that perfect face—though colder than marble to him—was irresistible, and he yielded.

She never dreamed in the most remote way how with his whole, strong heart, and for the first time in his life, he was growing to love her.

His face, the long training of his life, kept his secret well. She saw him petted, caressed, the brightest eyes, the sweetest lips in the land smiling upon him, knew that he studiously avoided herself, was calm and courteous and indifferent when they met, and knew no more.

Walls of pride, stronger than adamant, held those two haughty spirits asunder—were likely so to hold them their lives long.

(To be continued.)



[ANOTHER STRING TO HIS LORDSHIP'S BOW.]

BREAKING THE CHARM.
BY THE AUTHOR OF
"Tempting Fortune," "Scarlet Berries," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Wise judges are we of each other.

Lord Lyton.

To such a desperate condition had Frederick Garron been reduced by continued misfortune that he was able to bring his mind to consent to engage in a despicable plot which had for its object the ruin of Milly.

In vain were the promptings of his conscience. He told himself over and over again that he had once loved her, and that he loved her still. Lord Cardington's gold was more powerful than the promptings of conscience.

Unable to obtain a situation, he saw nothing but misery and increased despondence before him.

Besides which he felt angry with Milly for forgetting him.

She was to marry a rich and great man. Lord Cardington had explained all that to him; and Garron saw that the only chance of her becoming his wife—if such an event were possible under any combination of circumstances—was in her being poor and friendless.

He was a selfish sort of love after all, for he only cared for his own gratification, and not for her prosperity in the world, and happiness in a superior station of life to that which he could offer her.

It is strange how poverty and misfortune alter the characters of most men.

Once he would have acted very differently; but he had changed since the break-up of Mr. Haines's establishment at Chertsey, and was not the frank, open-hearted, generous young man he had been.

In obedience to instructions given him by Lord Cardington he sought for an infant, which they could use in making their infamous charge against poor Milly, and, as chance had it, Garron thought of a little baby which was the son of a groom who lived with his wife in a mews.

Garron had lodged with them for some weeks, while he did odd jobs in the stable, and he had gone away in their debt, but Lord Cardington supplied him with money to satisfy their demands, then Garron told them that if they would lend him the baby for a day or two it would be taken every care of, and they should be handsomely remunerated.

The couple had nine children, and this one, the youngest, was about fifteen months old. Though the wife was very anxious to know what he wanted the baby for, she did not press him, as he was reluctant to gratify her, and she ultimately consented to let it go with him.

Lord Cardington could not complete all his preparations until the end of the second day, when he went to Brighton with Garron, who carried the baby, and they were ready to pay an early visit on the morning of the third and eventful day to the duke's castle near Lewes.

The maid-servants at the second-rate inn at which they stopped paid all the requisite attention to the infant, which was a good-tempered, laughing, dimpled child, and the conspirators settled their plans over a bottle of wine.

"Let there be no mistake, my man," said his lordship. "You must declare that you are an old friend of Miss Haines; when confronted with you she will not deny this, because I know her nature to be truthful. Then say that you are the father of her child which you bear in your arms, and that she has contributed to its maintenance since its birth."

"I understand, my lord," replied Fred Garron.

"If she should marry my uncle, the duke, I shall be ruined, and such an event must be prevented at any cost. You may rely upon my gratitude, and if we be successful in prejudicing his grace against her I will advance you sufficient money to enable you to take a public-house or a grocer's shop, whichever you may prefer, and you will always have a means of living if you choose to look after it."

"Your lordship shall have no cause of complaint."

"Be firm," continued Lord Cardington; "pay no attention to her tears. Women can cry at will, and I have no doubt she will make an appeal to your feelings. What we have to do is to convince the duke that you are the father of a child, and that the infant is Milly Haines's."

"It shall be done," answered Fred. "I am too poor now to stick at trifles, and we will soon bring Milly to her proper level."

Lord Cardington was quite satisfied with the spirit displayed by the man he had hired to help him in his plot, and felt confident of success, because Garron was an excellent person to have to assist him, as he had been a sort of lover of Milly's before she left home, and, though she might deny the other part of the story, she could not help admitting the truth of that.

All this time Milly was far from dreading, or even thinking of the conspiracy that was being hatched to ruin her prospects.

She asked herself a hundred times whether she ought to marry the duke.

The question with her was not "Can I be happy with him?" but "Can I make him happy?" and she answered herself in the affirmative.

Really and truly she was of opinion that she could

so esteem and care for his grace that he would never repent having made his wife, and she acquitted herself of any mercenary motive in deciding to accept the offer he had made her.

"Why should I not?" she said to herself. "I love no one, and, if it be in my power to bestow my affection upon him, I will do so. He will always command my gratitude for the honour he proposes to do me. Once I thought I loved Lord Cardington, but his base behaviour and the infamy of his private character have effectively cured me of that delusion. I will marry his grace, and I will hope to be happy with him, though he is old and I am young and our tastes must necessarily be somewhat dissimilar."

Having come to this important decision, Milly thought she would put the duke out of any farther suspense.

It was the evening of the second day.

Once or twice since his declaration of love had been made she had fancied that he was cold in his manner, and tried to avoid her, but she got over the uneasy feeling which this supposition caused her by telling herself that old men were always peculiar, and that it was only reasonable to suppose that he would be a little shy while such an important question was depending between them, the result of which would tinge both their life currents for years to come either with happiness or the bitterness of the waters of Marah.

As usual, Milly dined at the duke's table, and when the repast was ended, she retired to the drawing-room, until his grace should join her to have coffee and listen to her music.

She was anxious to be alone with him, to tell him that she had made up her mind to accept his offer, and, when he came into the room, she got up from the piano, which she had been touching restlessly.

"Your grace," she exclaimed, "gave me three days to consider the high honour you did me when—"

"I know what you are going to say, my dear," he exclaimed, interrupting her; "but I do not want to anticipate your decision, however complimentary it may be to me. Wait till to-morrow, then we can talk about it as agreed."

"Certainly, if you wish it," she replied, feeling rather hurt, and wondering more than ever at the strangeness of his manner.

As if he feared that she would force the subject upon him, the duke said that he had some work to do in his cabinet, as owing to the absence of Philip Mallison he was obliged to catalogue and assort all the shells that Philip had brought from the East Indies.

It seemed to Milly that the duke had changed his mind, and she blamed herself for not accepting his offer at once, as he could not then have drawn back with any show of decency or self-respect.

But in the privacy of her chamber it occurred to her that her enemies had been poisoning his mind against her. Turner and Mrs. Cotteram had been dismissed through her influence, and she remembered well, upon reflection, that in the days when she was friendly with the housekeeper the latter had told her that Turner was a bad man, thoroughly devoted to that past and bugbear of the ducal house, Lord Cardington.

Here then was a clue to the mystery.

Having as she thought discovered the cause of the duke's sudden coldness to her, she did not experience much farther uneasiness, as she fully anticipated being able to clear herself from any stigma that had been cast upon her when she knew the nature of the charge, so the night passed and the morrow dawned.

Lord Cardington and Garron made their appearance at the castle about twelve o'clock. It would have been useless for them to do so before, as his grace seldom rose before half-past ten, and the important operations of dressing and breakfasting occupied the time until nearly mid-day.

"Well, Claude, well!" exclaimed the duke, shaking hands with him with more than his usual cordiality, "the time is up. Where's the child?"

"I have the father with me, and he has brought the infant," answered Lord Cardington, who did not blush at the detestable part he was playing. "But I want you to have the man in, and send for Milly before the baby is produced."

"Do it all in your own way," replied the duke, with a nervous twitching of the muscles of the face. "Monstrous odd. I should not have believed it of her. I have lost all faith in female human nature."

"Women are so artful and designing," said his lordship. "You don't know as much of them, uncle, as I do. Shut up here, you knowledge of the world is not to be compared to mine."

"Perhaps not. However, don't talk; make an end of it," replied the duke.

Fred Garron left the child with a servant, thus making the coming disgrace of Milly as public as possible, and he entered the presence of the duke, while Milly, who had been sent for, made her appearance almost at the same time by another door.

She started at seeing Lord Cardington and Garron, and looked from one to the other in perplexity. Now she could understand the nature of the misgivings that had recently disturbed her mind.

Taking no notice of his lordship, whom she purposely ignored with conspicuous contempt, she shook hands with Garron and expressed her surprise at seeing him, then, turning to the duke, she exclaimed:

"Your grace has sent for me."

"Yes," answered the duke, with some embarrassment. "The fact is I have an unpleasant duty to perform. You appear to know this young man."

"Certainly. He was in my poor father's employ," answered Milly.

"I am told he entertained more than a passing fancy for you."

"I believe he did me the honour to like me," answered Milly, "but I took such little interest in his advances that I never troubled myself to gauge the depth of his affection."

At a sign from Lord Cardington Garron went out of the room, returning presently with the baby, who had been crying, but directly it saw Milly it ceased, holding out its little arms and crowding loudly.

"See," exclaimed Garron, "it wants to go to its mother. At least, Milly, you will admit that this is our child?"

For a moment Milly was so overwhelmed with indignation and astonishment that she could not speak. The audacity and infamy of the accusation brought the red blood in a tide to her cheeks.

Instead of replying to Garron she turned an earnest, imploring look upon the duke.

"Is it by your grace's wish that I am subjected to this terrible insult?" she asked, in a voice that trembled with uncontrollable emotion.

"I'm on my word," answered the duke. "I can't say I have nothing to do with it. Monstrous odd, but—"

"That is quite sufficient. I can allow no one to doubt me," interrupted Milly. "My dream is over now."

"At least you will reply to these gentlemen," urged the duke.

"I will say nothing. Let my silence be expressive of the contempt I entertain for them. Your grace has forgotten a remark of the Romans which has passed into a proverb. Cesar's wife should be above

suspicion. In half an hour I shall have left your house for ever, and I must say that I think your conduct on the present occasion has cancelled all former obligations."

With this Milly, still burning with shame that such an odious and atrocious thing should be said of her, swept from the room.

The Duke made a step forward, as if he would have restrained her, but Lord Cardington, who had been watching him narrowly, seized him by the arm, saying,

"Let her go, uncle. You saw how she trembled when I tore the mask from her face."

"Take that child out of my sight!" muttered the duke, in an excited tone.

Cardington motioned to Garron to withdraw, which he did, well satisfied that so little had been required of him in playing his part.

"An impudent baggage," continued his lordship. "Did you not notice, uncle, that she could say nothing when she was exposed? She thought it a clever plan to affect indignation, but, unluckily for her, she could not impose upon you—at least, not while I was at your elbow. Come, uncle, sit down; don't excite yourself; remember your tendency to apoplectic."

"I thank Heaven, Claude, that my health was never better," returned the old nobleman. "It is the heart that is suffering now. Perhaps you have saved me from a disgrace, and from misery; but I do not thank you for what you have done. I loved that girl."

"Nonsense, my dear uncle," said Lord Cardington, bantering. "What is there in her to attract you? If you wish to marry a young and pretty girl to comfort the declining years of your life come up to town, throw open your mansion in Berkeley Square, that once was famed for its hospitality and the grandeur of its parties. I will guarantee that in less than a month you shall pick and choose from the best blood in England. Your fortune, your title, your power, irresistible to the ladies of the court and society generally, but to go and marry a nobody, with a stain on her character, it is too much. I may not have done all that I ought in keeping up the glory of our ancient name, though you cannot accuse me of unnecessarily degrading it."

"You wished me dead, Claude; my fortune would supply your extravagances."

"Nay, uncle," exclaimed Cardington, with an affected air of candour. "To show you how unjust your suspicions are I will tell you what I have done. It is true that I am burdened with debts. Why? From insufficiency of income. Well, I must work. Hearing that the governorship of the Labuan Islands is vacant, I have applied to the Minister of the day for the post, and have every expectation of getting it. In that far-off and almost savage country I will retrieve my shattered fortunes and serve an apprenticeship which shall fit me for some higher post at home. Try to think less ungenerously of me."

The old peer was moved.

"Is this true?" he asked.

"Time will prove. I have no object in deceiving you. Let me stay here for a few weeks. I will show you that my good qualities exist, though they may have been suppressed for a time. Have me by your side. Gauge me. See what there is of good in my character."

"Be it so; in the present turmoil of my mind I want companionship. You shall remain an inmate of my house. Perhaps I have been mistaken in you, Claude."

"Rest assured, uncle, it is so. My enemies have spread reports prejudicial to my character."

"If I should be satisfied that such is the case I will pay your debts and make you a free man once more," said the duke. "You shall stay here until the governorship of Labuan is decided. I will myself add my recommendation to the Prime Minister. It gives me joy to think that you are reforming. My title you must have when I die and the entailed estates, but the rest of my large property I can leave as I choose."

"If I take office under the Government I shall be independent of all the world, and commence a new career, which, in its brilliancy, shall blot out the past."

In this way Lord Cardington continued to talk to his uncle until the latter began to feel all his old liking for him return, and in a few days he so successfully poisoned his mind against Milly that he really believed that he had had a narrow escape from contracting an alliance with one utterly unworthy of him.

Garron returned to town with the baby, which he gave back safe and sound to its parents.

Milly went to Brighton, where she took lodgings, in the seclusion of which she thought over the great change which had occurred in her life.

It seemed as if the cup of success was always placed to her lips only to be dashed away again.

She had a little money which she carefully put by, and in order to eke out a subsistence she gave lessons in music, but she could not work hard, as her health

began to suffer from the harassing trials through which she had gone.

Lord Cardington, having thoroughly ingratiated himself with his uncle, contrived to borrow a few thousand pounds from him, with which he ran up to town to settle some pressing debts, which were causing him the most lively annoyance.

Milly was recruiting her shattered health, and inhaling the invigorating sea-breezes, hoping that she would be allowed to enjoy a little peace.

This, however, it was not Lord Cardington's intention she should do.

In the midst of his triumph he was as much her enemy as ever.

He feared her influence over his uncle, and, knowing his own villainy, dreaded least her energy might enable her to expose him.

It was necessary for his peace of mind that she should be removed as soon as possible, and with this end in view he continued to plot.

His application for the governorship of the Labuan Islands was a mere farce. He had no more intended going to the East Indies than he had decided to dwell in Kaiserschafft. He was far too fond of the luxurious vice and fashionable dissipation of London to think of quitting England.

The story was only invented to propitiate his uncle. What his infamous intentions were we shall see presently.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Waiting some time makes us wiser.

HAVING made several inquiries as to what Milly was doing, Lord Cardington was fully aware of her dwelling place and occupation, and he was afraid that she would write to the Duke of Lanes or attempt to gain an interview with him.

But he knew very little of Milly's independent and prudential character.

She had been treated with unmerited contumely, and the insults she had received sank deep down into her heart. She would have scorned to make any approach to the Duke. The mere fact that he had listened to the base calumny invented by her enemies made him for ever afterwards despicable in her eyes.

And such an insult as it was too! What thing more calculated to wound a high-minded woman to the very depth of her soul could they have selected?

Cardington, however, thought she was as unscrupulous and ambitious as himself, and as soon as he arrived in town he sought Doctor Wadden in May Fair.

Florence Wadden was not the gay flirt that we knew her to be some time back. Then she did not care for Lord Cardington because she thought she had a chance of marrying some one richer than he.

To be the wife of a poor and needy nobleman, whatever his expectations might be, was not at all to her mind. She had a horror of poor gentility. It was her opinion that rather than be a poor gentlewoman it was better to be a work girl with a sewing machine, and in the main she was right.

Only those who occupy the position know the miseries that attend a middle-class family with a small income.

Even the tradespeople who serve them, and grow richer year by year while the others do the reverse, look upon them with contempt, put a price upon their furniture, and privately canvass the value of the clothes they wear upon their backs, when they go to church on Sunday.

Somehow or other though Florence Wadden did not make her market; the man she loved would not have her because he thought her too worldly minded and too frivolous.

Other men whom she might have secured a few seasons ago turned from her now because they had found other and more congenial spirits.

So poor Florence was left out in the cold, and when a girl has become a woman, and has a younger sister, and looks in the glass now and then for a stray gray hair, the situation becomes embarrassing.

These causes amongst others produced an effect which was a sudden, savage, and desperate determination to marry some one.

"I will marry," she said to herself. "I won't be single any longer. I don't care who it is. Mamma is not so kind to me now she sees I am likely to stay on her hands."

It is not surprising under the circumstances that she became more attentive to Lord Cardington when he called that she had been before.

He was still a big fish, and one worth caring for, as he could bestow a title on his wife; but it was doubtful whether his lordship was a marrying man, and he certainly was wary.

Florence had her attractions. If not a lovely she was decidedly a showy girl, and stood conspicuous in the crowd of all observers.

Doctor Wadden had received a hint from Florence,

as to how the land lay, and he was glad of it, as he had always wished her to marry Cardington, so he made himself agreeable to his lordship on every occasion that presented itself.

Having called upon the doctor, Lord Cardington did not require much pressing to remain to dinner, and when the cloth was removed, and the ladies had retired to the drawing-room, he said as he drew his chair near the fire:

"I am glad of this opportunity to talk to you, Wadden; for I think we can be of mutual assistance."

"By all means. We are old friends, and anything you tell me in confidence will be safe in my mind," answered the doctor.

"You remember your niece, Milly Haines, about whom and myself the gossips told a curious story of excitement?"

"Yes."

"There was little or no truth in it; the girl does not like me, nor I her, but she is a thorn in my side and in yours too."

"In mine!" Doctor Wadden exclaimed, in surprise.

"Tell me all about that."

"I have seen her lately, and she expresses her determination to sue you for appropriating her father's property, which may cause you some uneasiness."

"Undoubtedly," said the doctor, fidgeting in his chair; "when old Haines died his money came just in time to save me from bankruptcy, and enabled me to pull round very comfortably."

"So much for you," continued his lordship; "now with regard to myself. Milly, curiously enough, obtained an engagement with my uncle, the Duke of Lewes, as amanuensis and all that sort of thing; the old dotard took a fancy to her and proposed—actually proposed!"

"Never!" cried the doctor. "You must stop that!"

"I have done so," answered Lord Cardington, with a short laugh of satisfaction. "But the master may crop up again, and I want the girl out of the way, for a time at least."

"How is it to be done?"

"Suppose, now, I were to ask your daughter Florence to be my wife—it would be a poor look-out if I did not inherit the duke's wealth with the title."

"So it would; but I did not know you proposed doing me such an honour."

"I have not actually said that I do," replied his lordship, cautiously; "though I believe I might do worse. However, that is not to the point, what has occurred to me is this: Milly's father died while in a state of temporary insanity, and she has done many peculiar things lately which lead me to believe that madness is hereditary in the family. I will give you one instance. For some months she dressed herself in male attire, and called herself the Count Montado. If that's not a freak of madness I don't know what is."

"Certainly, it looks very much like it. I think a doctor would be justified in certifying, under the circumstances, that she is not fit to be at large. Great difference of opinion as to what does and what does not constitute madness exists at present among doctors, and if one cannot always stick to a hard-and-fast line it is because the disease presents so many such complicated phases."

"Of course; and that is all in our favour. What I want you to do, for our mutual benefit, for your sake and my own as I said before, is to see the girl, and judge for yourself. If you think you can conscientiously say she is insane, have her taken to the county asylum, and I will pay a small charge for her maintenance."

"Suppose, for the sake of argument, that when the Commissioners in Lunacy come round to examine the patients they find that she is not mad, and discharge her," said the doctor.

"No blame will accrue to you, because you have good and sufficient grounds to go upon. You see, her father committed suicide, her mother is the inmate of a madhouse at this moment, and she does funny things; you, in the absence of her parents, are her nearest relative, and of course have a right to look after her. You do not want her to go about personating in a man's dress impossible foreign counts. It's not creditable to the family. Put her under restraint. I think they'll keep her. Mad doctors do not like to give up their prey, and very few escape the taint of the asylum. Perhaps her confinement there will actually disease her brain, in which case we are rid of her for life. However, it will answer my purpose if she be kept out of the way only for a few months."

"Where is she now?"

"At Brighton, in cheap lodgings, and teaching music; nerves rather shattered, and a fit subject altogether to operate upon."

"Has she delusions?" asked Doctor Wadden.

"One very remarkable one."

"Name it, for it will be useful to me when I visit her."

"She will tell you if you ask her that I hired a man to murder a protectress of hers, Mrs. Madison. Curious, is it not? Still the idea is in her head."

Doctor Wadden made a note of this circumstance.

"From what I can understand of her history, like said, 'Milly Haines must have gone through a great deal since she left home, and it is not outside my experience to find a girl affected by such unusual excitement. Did you give me her address?"

"It's here," replied his lordship, handing him a slip of paper.

"Thank you! I will visit her in a day or two and arrange for her being taken to Hanwell if I find that I can conscientiously certify. Of course I can do nothing against the dictates of my conscience."

The two men looked at one another, but neither of them smiled.

"Decidedly not," answered Lord Cardington. "I should be the last, my dear Sir, to wish you to do anything of the sort!"

When they joined the ladies his lordship had the satisfaction of feeling that he had placed Milly's future prospects in very good hands.

Florence played and sang, making herself very agreeable, and when she ended her sister took her place, leaving her to go and sit by Lord Cardington's side.

"It is some time," she said, "since we enjoyed an *ette à tête*. But in the old days you used to be such a tease that I was half afraid of you!"

"Are you not now?" he asked, smiling. "People say I am a very desperate fellow."

"I don't believe one-half of what people say, though I must confess I was jealous when I heard of your running away with my cousin Milly, and I never liked her afterwards."

"That was the result of the propensity for chatting which my poor friend Sir Elliott Bridges had."

"Was he not drowned when your yacht was wrecked?"

"Yes. There was nothing in the story, as he would tell you were he alive," answered Lord Cardington. "Poor Bridges. Poor Milly."

"Why do you say 'poor Milly'?" asked Florence Wadden.

"Because she has never been really sane since she left home. It is intended to put her in an asylum."

"Really," said Florence, whose face brightened. "If you can talk of such an event so calmly I am sure you do not care for her ill."

"Now ever did!"

"But perhaps she liked you. What insolence and presumption for one in her position to raise her eyes in your direction!"

"She has done more than that," said Lord Cardington, with a smile. "I was not high game enough for her, and she flew at my uncle."

"Impossible!" cried Florence.

"It is true. But I have saved him from the designs of an insane adventuress. I cannot now tell you how it all happened, but I will some day. Miss Haines's adventures would fill a large-sized book. Excuse me now, will you not, and be content. Flo, with my assertion that if I ever loved any one it was your dear self?"

"I am sure I ought to make some very pretty reply for that compliment," exclaimed Florence Wadden. "But after all you speak obscurely. You say 'if,' and you add 'was.' Now I should like you to leave out 'if' and put in 'is'."

"In other words, you wish me to say, the only person I ever cared for is Florence Wadden?"

"Precisely so," answered Florence, showing her white, glistening teeth and casting down her eyes.

"Florence," said a voice at the other end of the room.

"Oh, how tiresome; there is mamma calling me," said she, rising. "You will not be angry with my boldness. I was only talking in fun," she added.

He gave her a look of encouragement, if not of love, and she went away happy and radiant. That evening she told her sister that she was positive she could have Lord Cardington at once if she chose, but she wanted to wait a little while to satisfy herself about his means of maintaining a wife, and see how he got on with his uncle.

If Florence Wadden was playing a waiting game, so was his lordship. He had no intention of marrying her if he became the owner of his uncle's wealth, but he chose to keep her in tow, as better than nothing to fall back upon in the event of his scheme failing. In this way did those worldly people play with one another, and with deceit, mistrust, and calculation on each side, the prospect before them, if ever they did enter the holy estate of matrimony together, was not a very fascinating one.

Meanwhile the plot against Milly progressed actively. Influences were at work in her favour at the castle, but they could not do her much good.

When Lord Cardington was not at the duke's elbow the feelings of the latter softened towards Milly, and he was sorry for what he had done.

He could not bring himself to believe that she was guilty of the crime they laid to her charge.

Her calm dignity, her mournful refusal even to rebuke such an accusation, weighed with him in her favour.

It happened that on the day Lord Cardington returned to town to engage Dr. Wadden in his villainous scheme for shutting Milly up in a madhouse Philip Mallison came back to the castle.

This young man had formed a sincere attachment to Milly.

To see her was for him to love her, and love her he did with all the ardour of a first fond love. He considered her conduct in giving up to him his mother's property noble and disinterested to the last degree. "A lady who could act in such a manner could not help making an excellent wife."

He longed to say to her: "Darling, with this hand I give you back the money you voluntarily relinquished;" but would she take him into the bargain? He was afraid to ask himself this question, and hurried back to the castle to see what her real sentiments were, never suspecting the state of the Duke of Lewes's mind.

The duke was very agitated.

It was a cold, cheerless day, and he was pacing wildly up and down the terrace without any covering on his head, his silvery locks waving in the wind, and his features expressive of care, agitation, and anxiety.

Shaking hands with Philip, he did not appear to evince the usual cordiality he accorded him, and the latter ventured to remonstrate with him upon the inadvisability of braving the weather as he was doing.

"What does it matter?" answered the duke; "I deserve anything that may happen to me. Upon my word I believe some terrible affliction would only be a righteous punishment."

"What have you done, my lord?" asked Philip.

"I have driven into the world one whom I now believe to be unjustly maligned."

"You cannot mean Miss Haynes! I fancied I missed—"

"You have guessed correctly," answered the duke. "Listen to the story and give me your opinion of my conduct. In a few words he let him know the nature of the charge against her, by whom it was made, and how she received the odious communication."

Philip Mallison smiled contemptuously.

"Surely your grace has been misled. You have allowed your prejudices to get the better of your judgment," he exclaimed; "anybody who knows anything at all of London life has heard of Lord Cardington. He is your grace's nephew, and I will say no more than that he is held to be an unscrupulous villain, and that he has all to lose by your marriage and nothing to gain."

Philip spoke in a stifled voice.

The duke, who was keen-sighted enough at times, saw it, and divined the cause of the youth's agitation; he too loved Milly; they were rivals for her affection; but at that time it was useless to waste the hours in controversy.

He could think of nothing but Milly's forlorn position and the danger she was exposed to through Lord Cardington's enmity.

Philip should find her. Philip should bring her back to the castle if she would come, and she should hurl back the charge in the teeth of the man who had sought to injure her through the most sensitive part of a woman's armour.

Such was the result of the revulsion of feeling in the Duke of Lewes's breast.

But to find Milly and to save her was much more easily talked about than done.

(To be continued.)

WIMBLEDON COMMON.—The Wimbledon Common Committee having by the passing of the Act fully accomplished the purposes for which it was formed—viz., the securing in perpetuity for the public enjoyment the whole of Wimbledon Common, Putney Heath, and Putney Lower Common, open and unenclosed—and being desirous of celebrating the event, Mr. John Murray recently entertained the following members at dinner in Albemarle Street:—Mr. Alderman Besley, the Rev. Dr. Huntingford, Messrs. Benecke, Burrell, Davies, Dryden, Du Buisson, Du Cane, Hardwicke, Hussey, Jackson, Peck, Pollock, Reeves, and Williams. In the course of the evening the committee presented to Mr. Peck a silver cup and cover, of most elaborate workmanship, bearing the following inscription:—"Presented by the Committee for the Preservation of Wimbledon and Putney Commons to Henry William Peck, Esq., M.P., their chairman, as a mark of their sense of

his zeal, energy, and liberality, which effectually contributed to the successful termination of a long and obstinate struggle, and thereby secured the use of the commons, free and open, to the public for ever. 1871."

THE MYSTIC EYE OF HEATHCOTE.

CHAPTER XLVII.

On the afternoon when the final answer was made known, and it was learned that the representative of the Queen had positively refused to interfere, the worthy Indian officer was bitterly disappointed. He must go home, he said, and break the news to his poor wife; and, mounting his Arab mare, he cantered soberly away.

Detective Cowly was still vigilant, and his steel-blue eye had had the colonel in range for a number of hours, and when he mounted his Arab and cantered off the detective drew down his slouched hat and followed in his wake.

Passing the door of his own home, he dropped in for a moment to reassure his wife.

"Emmie, I'm on the track," he said, kissing the babe she held upon her knee, "so don't fret if you don't see me for a day or two. Take care of yourself and the little one."

Emmie nodded her curly head and put up her ripe lips for her share of the caresses.

"I will," she said, "and you'll not fail, Dick. I'm sure you won't, and you know my faith is as good as prophecy."

"I believe in my soul it is," said Dick, and the next instant he was off like a sleuth-hound, keeping the Arab's white heels in sight.

The colonel cantered up the broad drive that led to the grand old Abbey. At the great entrance he drew rein and nodded graciously to the waiting lodge-keeper. The colonel was a diplomatic man, and believed in securing the good-will of his subjects.

Jobson opened the massive gate with a profound bow, but the Arab was barely through when he shook his clenched fist after the officer's retreating form.

"Oh, you hypocrite," he snarled, "that ever I should see your likes a wearing Lord Heathcote's shoes!"

The words had not more than left his lips when the sturdy old servant felt himself roughly seized by the shoulder, and, turning, the cold muzzle of a revolver met his forehead.

"Speak one word or move an inch, and you're a dead man," whispered the detective, holding him with the grip of a vice. "Your master's a murderer, and I'm on his track—let me through!"

Jobson threw open the gate in utter silence.

"And now," continued Cowly, passing in, "not a word of this, you understand?"

Jobson nodded, and the detective hurried away, slipping his revolver into his breast pocket, and pulling his slouch hat lower, as he again caught sight of the cantering Arab.

Colonel Hernshawe dismounted at the front entrance, and passed up the mossy steps of the old Abbey with the alacrity of a boy. In the hall he inquired for her ladyship, and was told that she awaited him in the green drawing-room, and towards it he bent his steps.

This room was her ladyship's favourite apartment. It was a spacious room, with four deep windows looking out upon the fairest of the Heathcote grounds and on the distant sea, gorgeously frescoed and magnificently furnished.

In this room Colonel Hernshawe found his wife awaiting him. She was dressed in state, a magnificent robe of mauve silk, with rare old laces fluttering over it like flakes of snow, and gems of the most brilliant description on her bosom and amid her raven-black braids.

The colonel paused for an instant in the doorway, opening his eyes in amazement. Her ladyship arose, and bowed low before him, her dark face all aglow with exultant beauty, her fiery eyes glowing with triumph.

"I have heard," she said, her very voice quivering with suppressed emotion, "that it is all over, and we are safe, successful! I was awaiting your arrival. Come, my dear, and let us rejoice together over our triumph!"

She took his hand and led him to the velvet couch she had occupied, and placed herself beside him, encircling his neck with her round, jewelled arm, and pressing her lips to his brow. "Oh, my Ludovic," she murmured, "I love you so, and we shall be so happy!"

But the colonel's brow did not lighten or his stern features relax.

"I'm not sure of our safety yet," he replied, in a

bitter voice, as he freed himself from her encircling arms; "better not begin to rejoice too soon, we don't know what may happen yet."

She crossed to a tiny ormolu table, and poured some sparkling wine into a jewelled glass.

"You are out of heart, love," she said, presenting it, "and wearied with so much trouble; drink this."

He obeyed with evident willingness, draining it at a draught, and holding out the jewelled trifl for more. She replenished it again and again, smiling brightly as she saw the red glow surging to his swarthy cheeks.

"Ah," she said, "you begin to look like yourself again; there's nothing like good wine to raise one's spirits, and this is incomparable, some of the very oldest and rarest in the Heathcote vaults."

The colonel smacked his lips approvingly.

"The Heathcotes were a jolly race," he remarked. "Twould go deuced hard with us to give up all this now, eh—Carlotta?"

"We won't give it up!" blazed her ladyship.

"What if Lady Grace should turn up? I've heard twice this week that she still lives."

"Pshaw! a mere rumour, nothing more," returned her ladyship; "didn't I see the girl buried? And what object do you imagine Father Anselm could have had in trumping up a false story of her death?"

A peculiar smile wreathed the colonel's moustached lip, and he shrugged his shoulders.

"Can't say, I'm sure," he replied; "I only trust it will turn out to be a rumour. Twould be a fine business if she should reappear."

"Even in that case," suggested Carlotta, "it would not be impossible to cause her to disappear."

"Rather troublesome, though. I confess to a dislike to such jobs; and there's another thing that stings me, Carlotta, and I can't see for my life how you can sit so easy under it; but you women are as cruel as death. I don't like to see the boy die, Carlotta."

Carlotta showed her pretty teeth in a scornful smile.

"Let him die," she answered; "better than—well, than another."

The colonel flushed and paled alternately.

"Truly," he said, "but you're unnatural mother, and the boy the offspring of our long-ago love. It hurs me; I wish he could be saved."

His wife looked up, her wicked eyes melting. His reference to their long-ago love had touched her heart.

"I must tell you," she said, putting her arms about him, "and set your tender heart at rest. I ought to have told you long ago, but you know, Ludovic, I was never quite sure till late that you really would keep the old promise. But now you shall know."

She put her lips to his ear, and whispered a few sentences. He bounded to his feet with an exclamation of utter amazement.

"What?" he cried. "Woman, do you tell me the truth?"

"On my soul, the solemn truth, Ludovic," she answered.

"Good Heaven!" he ejaculated; "why, it takes away my breath. What a woman you are, Carlotta," he added, half admiringly. "Well, well, that takes a big load from my heart—he may swing at once for all I care. I begin to feel a little safe."

"Guilty! Ludovic Hernshawe, thou art the man! Thy hands are red with blood!" cried a sepulchral voice, and in the gathering gloom of the winter dusk both beheld, peering through the parted velvet hangings, that awful, spectral face.

Lady Heathcote uttered a piercing shriek, and fell fainting to the floor, and the colonel made a frantic effort to rush forward in pursuit, but as the ghastly face disappeared his tottering limbs gave way, and he sank back amid the cushions, stricken helpless with a partial paralysis.

But from behind the velvet arras another figure sprang, a man in gray, wearing a slouch hat; and through the stately apartments, and down the echoing corridors, he pursued the ghostly figure. On and on they flew, till they reached the ruined western wing and gained the descent to the Abbey vaults. At the mouth of it the man in gray gained upon the flying spectre, and seized him by his flowing garments.

"You are flesh and blood!" he cried; "speak! Stand your ground, or this hour shall make you a ghost in truth."

For answer the spectre extended one attenuated hand.

"Come," he said; "follow whither I lead."

Detective Cowly followed, nothing daunted, down the reeking steps and into the black gloom of the vault. The ghost paused midway in the loathsome vault, beckoning with an unearthly smile on his fleshless face. The detective rushed on, determined to solve the mystery. But all at once the solid earth

seemed to reel beneath his feet; the great flagstone on which they stood, heaved and trembled, and presently slid slowly downwards, and the detective and his ghostly companion were both engulfed in the grave-like darkness that yawned below.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

On the twenty-seventh day of February Carlos Brignoli and Hendrick Seaton were to be executed, and on the afternoon of the twenty-sixth there had been no respite or reprieve granted, nor was there even so much as the shadow of a hope that they might escape the terrible doom that awaited them.

Even their most energetic and powerful friends had given up in sheer despair, and strange to tell, the one friend who would have hoped even against hope itself, Mr. Cowly, the detective, had most mysteriously disappeared.

Since the day when he followed in the tracks of the colonel's Arab he had not been seen or heard from.

The neighbourhood was half frantic over this new excitement, and wondered, and gossiped, and surmised at a fearful rate; but even the most sanguine had accepted the universal dictum—the detective had been murdered by some secret enemy. That seemed the only solution of the mystery—to all but the bereaved wife. She shook her curly-haired head in grave doubt when any such rash conclusions were mentioned in her hearing. Her old faith was as strong as ever, a faith born of the deathless love the little woman bore her husband.

"Dick will come back to me," she said; "he has gone on a mission of his own, and he will not fail."

Through all the weary, dragging days and stormy nights, when the black clouds of mystery hung over the little Yorkshire hamlet, she kept a strong, stout heart, and tended her babe, and took care of her household, without even so much as a tear.

Now the afternoon before that last dread day had come.

Sitting in her cozy little room, with her foot upon the rocker of her baby's crib, she could see the gloomy old prison, and down in the desolate, brick-walled yard below, dimly visible in the dreary mist, the forms of the carpenters, already busy at their horrible task, preparing the ghastly instrument of death that would be needed on the morrow.

The tender-hearted little woman brought her hands together with a sharp cry.

"Oh, Heaven!" she moaned, "surely Thou hast not forsaken us! Is Thy arm shortened that it cannot save? Oh, Dick, oh, my husband, you will come!"

But the desolate February afternoon wore swiftly on, gray with sullen clouds and mist, and a lurid, ominous sunset blazed above the black Yorkshire hills, and lighted the windows of the grim old Abbey with a fitful glow. In a few brief hours it would be too late!

The detective's wife felt as if a sharp blade were piercing her heart. Giving the babe in charge of the nurse, she threw on her wraps and hurried out into the closing twilight.

About the same hour Carlos Brignoli stood at the window of his grated cell, looking down upon the muddy highways and plodding peasants below. The prospect was very dreary, despite the excited crowd that was filling the hamlet in anticipation of the coming morrow.

A dull, heavy mist hung pall-like over all things, blotting out every object, save the lurid spring sunset blazing above the black summit of the hills, and the gleaming windows of the old Abbey.

A dreary, desolate prospect, well suited to this, the closing evening of his life. He had long since abandoned all hope, and resigned himself to his fate; but at best his resignation was very bitter.

It was very hard to die a shameful death, with a felon's brand upon his name, in the very morning of a life that held such golden promises.

All his life long he had been shamed, and wronged, and disappointed; the very mother whose name he bore had been his most cruel enemy. Now, so soon after that wonderful revelation had been made to him by Margaret Seaton, he must die.

His heart thrilled as he remembered the marvelous story he had heard that night away out upon the measureless seas; and surely the woman who had just before stood face to face with death did not tell him a falsehood.

He felt very sure that all she had told him was true—something within him stronger than his own reason or wisdom told him so.

He must die, and the world never know him as anything more than he seemed—a nameless, blood-stained felon!

He had no hope, for he had heard of Margaret Seaton's arrest and imprisonment.

Janet at last had succeeded in gaining admittance

to the prison. She had seen her uncle, and received his last instructions; and, with the old Heathcote opal hidden in her bosom, she had sought an interview with the young officer. She told him of Margaret's arrest, but, not daring to break the confidence entrusted to her, and knowing nothing of the young man's history, she made no mention of the secret of Lady Grace's existence; and they parted with a few sad words, and Janet still had charge of the opal ring.

Now, bereft of his last hope, the young prisoner stood at his grated window, looking out with solemn eyes into the dismal February gloaming, and thinking, with an aching despair at his heart, of all the unrealized possibilities that to-morrow's cruel fate would for ever end.

The thought was very bitter, and with it came another remembrance even sharper still—the remembrance of that uncertain whisper that Lady Grace still lived.

Truly it was a mere rumour, without proof or foundation, yet for his life he could not banish the fancy from him. Day and night it haunted him.

He glanced at the ring upon his finger, which all his trials had failed to separate from him—her parting gift—the tiny diamond dove with its emerald olive branch beneath its bill. How vividly he remembered her parting words and the wondrous glory of her young face!

But, in the very midst of these reflections, some sudden and indefinable attraction arrested his thoughts. They wandered back to the muddy streets below; and there, with an indescribable thrill, he beheld a slender figure clad in nun-like gray, and wearing a gray hood, from beneath which glimpsed of golden hair gleamed out like rifts of sunshine.

The young prisoner watched her with a kind of breathless fascination as she cleared the muddy crossings with light and dainty steps; and when she flitted from his sight beneath the frowning shadow of the prison he threw himself upon his bed of straw with a pang of keen disappointment for which he could not account.

The sound of footsteps in the corridor and the grating of the rusty key aroused him. The door of his cell swung open, and he heard the keeper's rough voice without.

"Only twenty-five minutes, miss, remember not a moment more—time's most up now—we lock up for the night at six."

Then a slender figure wrapt in trailing robes of gray glided in and stood before him, her little lily hands clasped upon her bosom, and her falling hood revealing a white but exquisitely beautiful face.

The young officer rose slowly to his feet. He recognized her in an instant, and for the moment he really believed that the disembodied spirit of the maiden he so adored had been permitted by Heaven to appear unto him. Overwhelmed with awe and amazement, he stood speechless, his eyes riveted upon the angelic face before him, not daring to breathe scarcely lest it should vanish from his sight.

But the little figure advanced towards him after a moment's hesitation.

"Oh, Carlos," she cried, extending both hands, her voice full of love's thrilling pathos, "Carlos, have you forgotten me?"

"Lady Grace, you are alive!"

The cry broke from his white lips half in rapture, half in keenest agony, for in that instant of supreme bliss, when his lost treasure was restored to him, he felt the bitterest pang that his manly young heart had ever suffered.

"You are alive," he cried, "and to-morrow I must die. Oh, my love, my beautiful darling!"

The girl put out her arms and clasped him close.

"We will die together," she murmured, passionately; "they shall never separate us again."

"My darling, my queen, my love," he murmured, dropping kisses on her pearl-like face and gleaming hair; "oh, to hold you thus again repays me for all I have suffered! Oh, Gracie, you never can know how bitterly I mourned you."

"Yes, I can, dear," she answered, quietly, lifting her tender eyes to his; "they made me believe that you were dead, and through all my weary imprisonment and banishment from home nothing else caused me such pain. I grieved so to think I had suffered my father's will to stand between us," she continued, a faint flush rising to her pearl-like cheeks.

"I have thought a great deal, and I can see some things more clearly than when we parted, Carlos. I honour and venerate my dear father's wishes as much as ever, but I am convinced, dear, that no man, not even a father, has a right to interfere in a matter like this. I never could have married Lord Remington. I am sure my dear father would never have desired it had he known the young man in his true character. And, dearest," she added, clasping him again in her slender, graceful arms, "when I heard the blessed tidings that you were alive I made a vow

that nothing, not even my father's will, should stand between us. I am content to resign all, and have nothing in the wide world beside your love."

She laid her soft cheek upon his breast, her hair streaming over him like a golden cloud.

"You love me so much," he cried, hoarsely, great beads of agony starting out upon his brow, "and to-morrow I must give you up! Great Heaven, 'tis hard to bear!"

Her very lips whitened, and she clung to him with a convulsive tremor, but she never lost her steadfast faith.

"Yes, dear," she said, "I know, but I don't believe Heaven will permit it. That made me so anxious to be with you, to comfort and encourage you, because my faith is so strong. When I first heard the awful story of your arrest, that happy day when I waited for you to come, it struck me down like a cruel blow, and for weeks I lay ill and insensible. The good woman who nursed me kept me in ignorance when my reason returned, and she told me you would be acquitted. But one night I overheard them talking, and I learned that you had been convicted and sentenced. I was as weak as a baby then, not able to raise my head, but I prayed to Heaven to give me strength to come to you. And, darling, the very next morn I arose and started on my journey. And, dearest, I have faith in it; it will not let them take you from me, for you are all I have in the wide world."

"But, my own precious love," he said, gently, "you must remember there is not a shadow of hope. My friends have made appeals to the highest sources, and all have failed."

"And I have appealed to Heaven, which is above them all, love!"

Her sublime trust thrilled him with a delicious hope.

"Oh, if it might be so," he prayed, holding her close to his heart, "oh, if I might live for your sake, my darling, I would strive so hard to make your life happy."

"I should be happy if you loved me, dear," she answered, simply.

The keeper's warning rap was heard without.

"Can that be the summons to separate us?" cried Carlos, "and I have so much to say! Oh, Gracie, darling, who will right all your bitter wrongs when I am gone? I know so many things of which you do not even dream, but I shall leave a written statement for you, and Janet Seaton will give you the Heathcote opal. There, the time is up, it is unlock the door. Promise me, sweet love, that when I am gone you will do your best to recover your right possessions, and that you will not grieve for me too deeply; you have made my last hours blissful, let that remembrance comfort you!"

She shook her head slowly.

"No, dear," she said, "there will be no need of any statement if you should be taken from me—in that case I should never assert my claims; I do not covet the Heathcote wealth and honours, only for your sake. Left to myself, bereft of your precious love, I should seek some solitary asylum and die. But, my dear love, Heaven, that gave me strength to rise from my bed of sickness, and come to you, will not take you from me. Carlos, mark my words, you will not die to-morrow."

And with a fond caress she left him.

CHAPTER XLIX.

In the muddy street beneath the prison Lady Grace paused, irresolute, debating within herself as to what step she should next take. The fog was heavier and blacker, and the lurid sunset had died out, leaving the distant hills crowned in sombre gloom, and high above the surrounding dwellings arose the grim, gray turrets of the old Abbey. The young heiress gazed upon this grand old monument of her race with yearning, wistful eyes. She loved it with a fond, proud love, yet she did not dare to seek shelter beneath its roof.

While she stood thus, sad and irresolute, gazing towards the mournful willows that trailed above the graves of her ancestors, and above that little grave whose marble spire bore her own name, a woman approached her—a well-clad little body, with a rosy, cheery face.

Within a foot of Lady Grace she came to a sudden halt, and a sharp exclamation escaped her lips. For a full minute she stood and stared at the little, gray-robed figure before her, then she advanced to her side.

"Lady Grace Heathcote!" she called, laying her hand on her arm.

Grace gave a quick start, and turned sharply.

"You are Lady Grace," asserted the detective's wife, quietly; "I knew you in an instant. And how be kind enough to tell me if you just came up from under the marble stone yonder, or are you real flesh and blood?"

"Flesh and blood, I believe, though very weak and ghost-like at present," replied Grace, smiling sadly.

"So I see; and you were not dead after all—the very thing I always suspected, as I've told Dick a hundred times. But how comes it that you're standing here in this drenching mist with such a woe-be-gone face?"

"Because I'm homeless. I was just wondering who would grant me shelter for the night," replied Grace.

The little woman laughed, and her eyes filled with tears.

"True enough," she said. "Poor, wronged child! come home with me. I was on my way to the prison, but I see 'tis closed for the night."

"Yes; I have just come out."

"You? Did you see the prisoners?"

"One of them. They are both very dear friends of mine, and there are some things that I must do for them to-night. I have been ill, and feel very weak from travelling all day; if you will let me go home with you, and get a cup of tea, I think I shall be strong enough to do what I purpose."

For answer the little wife of the detective drew Grace's arm within her own, and they walked on in the direction of the little vine-shaded cottage. For a moment or so both remained silent, then the detective's wife broke out, impetuously:

"I never was so worked up about anything in my life," she said. "I do believe, if they are hung tomorrow, I shall go mad, though neither of them is anything to me. But my husband's a detective, and he's out now on the track of the true murderer. Those men are innocent, you know."

"Yes, I know it," answered Grace, solemnly.

"Very well; my husband knows the guilty man, and he's out now, been gone nigh two weeks, and I've not heard a breath from him. But he'll come back," she added, choking down a sob. "Dick will come back, and the prisoners will be saved."

"Yes, I'm sure they will."

"Are you? I'm glad; your faith will make mine stronger, and I mustn't doubt now. And, if you will pardon me, what do you purpose doing?"

"I'm going to the Anchorage to see St. Denys Delmar."

"Yes, but he's bereft of reason."

"I must see him nevertheless."

They walked on for a moment or two in silence, and suddenly, as the roll of wheels was heard, Mrs. Cowly whispered:

"Lower your veil—here comes the Heathcote carriage! Quick! your life won't be worth a shilling if her ladyship sees you!"

Lady Grace caught at her veil, which she had thrown back in order to feast her tearful eyes upon the familiar home scenes that surrounded her; but a sudden gust of wind whirled it from her grasp, and the grand carriage, emblazoned with the Heathcote crest, swept by before she could conceal her face.

Colonel Hernshawe, looking quite aged, and carrying his right arm in a sling, occupied the front seat, and he was gazing intently from the window as the vehicle went by. He recognized the detective's wife on the instant, and, giving the silken check-strap a little jerk, he called out:

"Ah, Mrs. Cowly, how do you do this evening? Have you had any tidings from your husband yet? I feel so anxious about him."

Little Mrs. Cowly made her best courtesy, and replied with due respect, while poor Grace, thrown into a tremor of terror by the sound of the colonel's voice, turned her back upon them and caught frantically at her refractory veil; but vainly enough, for the steel-gray eyes of the Indian officer had seen her face and recognized it. An ashen pallor settled about his lips, and he shook from head to foot.

"Great Heaven, Carliotta!" he whispered, hoarsely. "It is she!"

"Who?" gasped her ladyship, leaning forward.

"Lady Grace herself!" replied the colonel between his set teeth as the carriage rolled on.

"I'm afraid he knew you," remarked Mrs. Cowly as she seated her guest before the cheerful fire in her little sitting-room and prepared to arrange her tea-table; "and he's a dangerous man, I'm thinking; but Dick will be here soon, and we'll have the colonel safe enough. Dick will come to-morrow, if not tonight," she added, with the desperation of a dying hope, "and he'll take your case in hand; so don't fret, dear, but lie down on the sofa here and take your rest till the tea is ready."

The girl obeyed her in silence, but a feeling of terrible dread oppressed her, and she shivered with absolute terror at the bare remembrance of Colonel Hernshawe's startled and cruel eyes.

CHAPTER L.

On this self-same afternoon Janet Seaton paced her little room at the Telfer tavern with despair

gnawing at her heart. That morning she had received a note from Lord Glandore, telling her that he had done his utmost to save her friends, but had failed. He could effect nothing either by influence or money. But he entreated her, if there was the slightest wish of hers that he could gratify, not to hesitate to command him.

Hastily putting on her out-door apparel, she left the house, and walked rapidly to the highway, actuated by a vague impulse over which she seemed to have no control. She reached the crossing just as the express coach was passing, never pausing to consider what she was doing. She hailed it and got in.

For miles and miles the coach travelled through the gloomy fog, and as the early twilight began to fall the driver called out, "Glandore Arms."

Janet gathered up her mantle and alighted. The "Glandore Arms" was a thriving inn at the foot of a fine eminence on whose summit arose the imposing old mansion known as Glandore Court.

Towards this place Janet, with a white and resolute face, directed her steps. Arriving at the house, a valet answered her summons, and she asked to see Lord Glandore. She was conducted into a drawing-room, very sumptuous and very brilliantly lighted, and the valet politely requested her card. Poor little Janet, flushing with embarrassment, was forced to send up her name—card she had none. In one minute his lordship entered the room.

"My poor little girl!" he exclaimed, taking both her trembling hands, "how cold and white you are! Come with me."

Supporting her with his arm, he led her away into a cozy library, closely curtained and dimly lighted, and seating her in a huge chair before the glowing grate, he poured out a tiny gobletful of wine, which he forced her to drink. Then, seating himself beside her, he took her hand and said, with tender kindness:

"Now, my little friend, you have only to speak and let me know what it is I can do for you."

Janet struggled for words, but the young man's tender voice, the clasp of his hand, and the fond glance of his handsome eyes, utterly overcame her. The words she tried to speak were lost in a sob, and all she could do was to burst into tears.

The nobleman let her cry for a while; then he attempted to draw the glossy head to his shoulder.

"Poor child!" he said, soothingly, "you are worn out with your trouble."

But Janet drew back with flashing eyes and blazing cheeks. That little, caressing movement had made her all her own proud, defiant self.

"You despise me, I'm sure, Lord Glandore," she said, "as I despise myself for this weakness. I beg your pardon—I have taken you at your word, and come to you for help and advice again."

"You are welcome; I would lay down my life to serve you, Janet."

She took no notice of the glance that gave such thrilling meaning to his words, but went on, impetuously:

"I have not told you all, nor half, Lord Glandore, of the strange things connected with this terrible murder. I ought to have done so, but I had promised to be silent; and——"

She paused, flushed and embarrassed.

"You were too proud to come to me, my little friend," put in his lordship, smilingly.

"My pride is now humbled," she went on, "and I will tell you all, trusting that even in the few brief hours that remain something may be done. Will you hear me, my lord?"

He bent his head in an attitude of grave attention, and, inspired by her agonized earnestness, Janet told her strange story. The young man listened, watching the play of her perfect features and the dash of her fearless eyes in breathless amazement. Who and what was she? he wondered, so lovely, and so strangely gifted, and yet so lowly born! When she had finished he started to his feet in utter consternation.

"Child," he cried, "have you told me the truth?"

"The solemn truth, before Heaven, Lord Glandore."

"Then why was not all this made known before? Lady Grace alive! Why, Janet, child, you did wrong not to tell me this a month before."

"I know it now, my lord; but I had given my word not to divulge the secret, and I had no friend to advise me," she answered, humbly.

"I suppose not; but it is very unfortunate, there is such little time now. But I'll do all that can be done."

"Oh, my lord, do you think there is any hope?"

"I cannot say, Janet, I will only promise to do all that can be done. Sir Thomas Little is at Treventh Castle now, and I must see him first; there's not one moment to lose. I must start this instant. I will order my carriage to take you home. Good-bye now. I shall be at Heathcote to-morrow. Heaven comfort you, Janet."

He raised her hand to his lips.

"Oh, my lord," she sobbed, "how shall I ever repay you?"

He paused for an instant in the doorway, smiling back upon her with a look of unspeakable tenderness.

"Will you give me my reward when I demand it?" he asked.

"No, my lord," she answered, sadly, but with firm decision. "Not what you mean—not that!"

"Then I must serve you because I love you, and expect no compensation. Good-bye!"

He strode away, and, in ten minutes after, Janet was rolling homeward in the Glandore carriage.

CHAPTER LI.

LADY GRACE did not forego her purpose of going to the Anchorage, despite the terror she felt at the thought of again encountering Colonel Hernshawe.

She had set her heart on seeing her guardian, and she went, and alone too.

Mrs. Cowley's baby was not well, and she could not leave it, and Grace insisted that she would run less risk of being recognized by herself.

Accordingly, well muffled in her gray wrap, she struck into the familiar path that led up to the seashore of the old admirals.

How well she remembered every ancient landmark as she sped on in the deepening gloom; her eyes filled with tears, and a bitter pain pierced her heart, a thousand sacred memories crowding back upon her.

She found the gates and doors all wide open, in accordance with the characteristic carelessness of the Dolmar family, and she made her way into the gloomy old hall without having encountered a single soul.

The silence and desolation filled her heart with terror; the very wings of the death-angel seemed to overshadow the home of her unfortunate guardian.

But firm in her purpose, despite her superstitions dread, she ascended the stone staircase with noiseless feet, and on the second landing she encountered the gray-haired butler. She knew him as well as she knew the quaint angles of the old house, but the old servitor's dim eyes of the old house, but the old servitor's dim eyes failed to recognize in the stately, nun-like figure that stood before him the little golden-haired child he had so often carried on his shoulder; and with many a bow he conducted her to the door of her guardian's room.

The family were worn out, he said, with grief and anxiety, and unless she desired it he would not disturb them, the mistress being quite ill.

Lady Grace did not desire it; she would only slip in and look at the invalid's face, she said, and then depart as quietly as she had come. With a thrilling heart she tapped softly at her guardian's door. The nurse admitted her, and in answer to her inquiries pointed silently towards the white face that lay upon the pillow.

"Just the same," she said, "with no more hope, the doctors say."

She went back to her chair before the dying embers, and Grace drew near the bed with streaming eyes. The sight of her guardian's face stirred the very depths of her heart. She bent down and kissed the pale, placid face again and again, her warm tears falling upon it like gentle dew.

"Oh, my dear old guardy, my good, kind guardy, won't you look at me and speak to me once more?"

The pathetic voice, so soft that it failed to reach the dozing nurse's ear, still seemed to arouse the slumbering senses of the dying man. He stirred slightly and opened his eyes. Grace bent her face close to his.

"Dear guardian," she murmured, "don't you know me? I am Gracie, poor little Gracie, come back to you!"

For a moment the poor, vacant eyes wandered pitifully; but at last they settled on the girl's face. A sudden flush dyed the white face, a tremor shook the emaciated frame, the hands that Grace held, clenched hers convulsively.

"I am Gracie—I have come back to you," she continued to murmur, dropping kisses on his face with every word; "dear guardian, you do know me?"

The vacant eye changed like a flash of lightning, the poor, quivering lips parted in a vain attempt to speak, and St. Denys, with one great effort, struggled to a sitting posture and threw out his arms with a groaning cry.

But the effort was too much for him; the transient flush died out, leaving his lips deathly white, and, as the nurse, aroused by the cry, reached the bedside, he fell back upon the pillows in a deathlike swoon.

"Good Heaven! What have you done to him?" she ejaculated, in amazed affright.

"I only spoke to him," Grace replied as she pressed her lips again to the white, wan face; "he is a dear friend of mine, my good woman, and he is on the point of recovering his reason. See how his face has changed in the last few minutes. Summon his friends at once!"

The nurse seized the bell-rope and gave it a violent shake, and, as the startling peal rang through the silent house, with one last glance at the still face Lady Grace departed as silently as she came.

Out in the gray twilight of the park she paused for an instant to collect her thoughts and to decide upon what step she should take next. That her guardian would ultimately recover, and regain his reason sufficiently to be able to testify in regard to the murderous attempt upon his life, she had not a doubt; and now the very first thing to be done was to convince the proper authorities of this fact, and to get a respite for the prisoners until this testimony could be obtained.

But how or where to begin?

That was the puzzling question, and every fleeting moment was so precious. If Heaven would only help and direct her—she was so weak and friendless, and the time was so short.

As if in answer to her prayer, a happy thought struck her.

She would go down to the old rectory—he was one of her dead father's dearest friends—and make herself known to him, and entreat his help and counsel. He would not refuse her, and he would keep her secret and aid her in avenging Colonel Hernshawe and his family till the storm had blown over.

Accordingly, drawing her wraps closer, she struck across the park.

The twilight was rapidly settling down into a starless night when she reached the narrow road that led down to the Rectory, an ancient building within the confines of the Abbey.

Presently a sharp whirr of approaching wheels struck on her ear, and the next moment a closed carriage drew up across her way.

She stood still for an instant, undecided what to do; and, in that brief interval, a dark figure leaped from the carriage and approached her.

"Come," said a pleasant, mocking voice, while a heavy hand grasped her arm, "the night is too unpleasant for the heiress of Heathcote to be plodding along on foot."

Grace recognized the voice on the instant, and darted aside with a sharp cry; but the grasping hand held her like a vice, and the next moment she was hurried away and placed within the waiting vehicle, so swiftly and effectually that resistance was out of the question. The door closed with a snap, the carriage whirled away at lightning speed, and, turning her startled glance upon the man beside her, with a thrill of unspeakable horror and despair Lady Grace beheld the mocking and triumphant face of Colonel Hernshawe!

CHAPTER LII.

The morning that dawned after that night of gloom and sorrow, as if in bitter mockery, was as bright and glorious as sun could make it. Every window in the grand old Abbey glittered like gold, and its gray turrets loomed up in the misty brightness, crowned with gleaming sunlight. Never before, perhaps, had that wild Yorkshire country wore so bright an aspect or known a day dawn of such golden promise.

And yet, down in that gloomy prison yard, rising up grimly and terribly beneath a cloudless sky, awayed to and fro by the sweet Southern breeze and gilded by the yellow sun-rays, was that awful gallows-tree; and behind those black, grated windows sat the two doomed men, awaiting the hour of their death.

Colonel Hernshawe rode down to the village at an early hour, mounted on his favourite horse, his arm still in a sling from his late attack, his face placid and content, despite the bitter work in waiting. But, old soldier that he was, he paled and shuddered at sight of the gallows, and spurred his horse past it in nervous haste.

He had ridden down at the request of his poor wife, he said, to learn if there was any news—any hope of a reprieve at the last moment. But there was none; the last terrible preparations were going on, and the prisoners would die at twelve o'clock.

So the colonel rode back to the Abbey, feeling even more content, and sought his wife in her boudoir to communicate the news. Then they sat down together to a tempting breakfast, served upon gold and silver, and daintiest chinis; her ladyship wearing an exquisite morning toilet and looking so wondrously bright and beautiful that the Indian officer fell in love with her over again, and began to experience the old emotions he had felt a score of years before, amid the gipsy tents on

Lislewood Heath; or at any rate he pretended to feel so, for he made all manner of pretty speeches. A happy pair were they, with only two hours between them and safety! The prisoners would die at twelve.

Meanwhile a motley crowd began to assemble in the village streets, and on the green surrounding the prison.

Faithful Janet stood at the window of her little chamber at "The Heathcote Arms" and watched them with a dull pain at her heart more torturing than absolute misery. She had just had an interview with her mother, who had reached Heathcote in the early train, bringing the startling news that Lady Grace had disappeared, whether in a fit of delirium or with the purpose of visiting her imprisoned lover they could not find out.

The poor woman, accompanied by Mrs. Telfer, had gone down to the prison to bid her brother a last farewell, and Janet, who could not trust herself to go, stood at the window in an agony of despairing suspense. Would Lord Glandore come as he had promised? Her hot, aching eyes watched the high road with feverish impatience, but the precious moments went by and he did not come.

Presently the detective's wife passed by, on her way to the prison, and Janet ran down and called after her:

"Mrs. Cowly, won't you stop one moment? Have you heard—oh, I mean is there any news, any hope?"

The little woman turned sharply and walked back.

"No," she replied, almost fiercely; "there's no news—no hope! Good Heaven, Janet!" and she caught at the girl's hand, her face convulsed with agony; "is there no hope? Will Dick fail? Won't he come back to me?"

Janet shook her head sadly, her eyes running over with tears.

"I'm afraid not, Mrs. Cowly."

"You are? And do give up then?" She turned aside muttering words, and faced the glowing East, her face quivering between faith and fear. But presently the sweet, winsome eyes grew radiant.

"No," she cried, with clasped hands; "don't tell me to doubt. Dick will come back to me—he will; he will, and the poor creature down there will be saved."

She turned, and resumed her walk in the direction of the prison, strong in her sublime faith, and Janet watched her out of sight with a faint hope thrilling her heart. A sudden thought struck her at this moment.

She had heard so often of the mystic charm of the Heathcote opal—how in moments of peril and danger the baleful, warring eyes appeared in its heart.

Impelled by an irresistible impulse, she drew the little case from its hiding-place in her bosom, and took out the ponderous old gem.

With shaking fingers she held it up in the morning sunlight, expecting to see the awful eyes looking out from its translucent depths; but instead, a flash of dazzling splendour almost blinded her, and the quaint old jewel seemed to quiver with absolute life in the sudden halo of glory that surrounded it.

"Oh, Heaven!" cried Janet, lifting her streaming eyes; "help me to trust in Thy mercy too!"

CHAPTER LIII.

BREAKFAST over, and the pleasant idle-tidies with her ladyship at an end, Colonel Hornshawe lighted a fragrant cigar, and strolled leisurely out of the luxurious breakfast-room, and down to the ruined terrace beneath the haunted western wing of the Abbey.

Here he took a turn or two, puffing fiercely at his cigar, and glancing up over and over at a ruined old tower which flanked this deserted wing, and rose grim and gray above the dark lake and fallen portcullis, where there had once been a drawbridge in the palmy days of the old Abbey.

The brave colonel was evidently a trifle shy of entering this desecrated home of bats and owls, whether from fear of encountering the spectre that haunted it or in dread of the crumbling walls and tottering steps. It is impossible to say.

But, after some little hesitation, he succeeded in screwing his courage to the sticking-point, and, plunging through a narrow doorway, through the dust and rubbish of a ruined corridor, he encountered a spiral staircase, which he rapidly ascended.

At last, having reached a dizzy height, he landed in a square hall, into which two massive doors opened, one of which he unlocked with a rusty key which he took from his pocket.

The door swung reluctantly open on its creaking hinges, and the colonel entered, closing it carefully behind him.

It was a square apartment, dimly lighted by two turret windows; and, on her knees at one of these, her golden hair streaming to her feet, her white face pressed against the diamond panes that looked down upon the old prison lying far below, her slender hands locked in silent prayer, crouched Lady Grace Delmar Heathcote, a prisoner in the proud old home where so many of her race had lived and died.

As the colonel entered she sprang to her feet and confronted him, her lovely eyes wild with despair and agony.

The Indian officer seated himself quite coolly, still puffing at his cigar, a bitter, mocking smile in his glittering gray eyes.

"Well, my dear," he said, at last, removing his cigar, "I trust I find you feeling rested this morning. Come here, and sit down; I've come up to receive your orders for breakfast. Only see how considerate I am for your comfort, despite all the agonies and cruelty I have received at your fair hands."

Lady Grace vouchsafed him no answer, save one blazing glance from her blue eyes, then she turned again to the turret window.

"Pretty little spectacle down there this morning, eh?" continued the colonel, crossing to her side, with a fiendish smile on his face. "I gave you this room purposely, knowing how much you would enjoy it. You see what a kind, good fellow I can be when you urge me to it."

The girl locked her hands tightly across her breast, but made no answer, and the colonel went on:

"You gave me the slip cleverly enough at the old Alpine prison, thanks to that burly shoemaker, who will swing down there this morning; but you are a prisoner for good this time, my pretty bird, so the sooner we understand each other the better. I want to be kind to you. I would have made you my wife long ago, but you would not agree, foolishly enough, you see. But I've got what I wanted, all the same, your father's name and possessions, and your lovely self in the bargain. I am Lord of Heathcote, and my will is law; so you see how silly it will be to resist and oppose me."

Still the girl made no answer, nor even showed by so much as a tremor of her marble-like face that she heard his cruel words. The colonel bit his moustache in angry impatience.

"You know what the world believes," he went on, determined to sting her into some show of resistance. "Lady Grace Delmar Heathcote lies buried under the marble down there, and you are mindless soul and body. But, as I have said, I wish to be kind to you, because I love you yet. You shall want for nothing that money can procure. My darling, what do you say?"

He put his hand on her shoulder, bending his face so close that his hot breath scorched her cheek. Mad with agony and shame, the girl turned upon him like some lovely wild creature held at bay.

"How dare you?" she cried, all the proud blood of her race flashing in her glorious eyes, and flaming in her cheeks. "How dare you insult me thus, and I a Heathcote?"

As she uttered the words, quick as light her right hand sought her breast, then shot forward, armed with a slender, shining blade. But the colonel's practised eye caught the movement, and he threw up his arm, barely in time to save his dastardly heart. The sharp blade pierced his elbow, and shattered at the hilt.

"You shall pay dearly for this!" he cried, his very lips white with the pain.

"And you shall pay dearly for the work of this day," she retorted, confronting him like a young Pythoness inspired with prophecy. "Two innocent men will die to-day for the crime your hand committed. You are the guilty murderer, Colonel Hornshawe, and as sure as there is a Heaven above us your crime will be made known. St. Denis' Delmar is recovering, and his testimony will convict you."

The colonel staggered back, his face growing ashy white, and his limbs refusing to support him.

"Girl," he hissed, his teeth chattering as he spoke, "you shall die for this!"

"You shall die first, you murderer! Touch me at your peril," shrieked her eyes blazing upon him like the lightning of Heaven's justice.

Awed and bowed in spite of himself, the Indian officer, who had faced a line of hissing bayonets without a tremor, after a moment's hesitation turned his back upon her and left the room, locking the door behind him.

(To be continued.)

THE PORTRAIT OF THE PRINCE OF WALES AT NIJE.—It is really extraordinary, says the Swiss *Times*, to see the number of people at Nijé who stop to look at the photograph portrait of the Prince of Wales exhibited by Numa Blanc. The Prince has bought it for his mother, the Queen. The Prince

of Wales has given orders to have it framed in wood of Nive, with the coat of arms of her royal husband.

WHEN TO REPOT CAMELLIAS.—Before giving any camellias larger pots there are two things concerning them I wish to impress upon the reader's attention. The first is to remember that, as a rule, camellias do not like repeated shifting or knocking about in any way, more especially at the roots. The next is to remember that over-potting is a serious mistake when the plants are small; large plants of course will not suffer so much, as they are better able to take care of themselves. It is also well to bear in mind that it is not the strongest growth which produces the most bloom or the best individual flowers; in fact, we always find that those specimens which show the largest and best bloom are those with a rather limited amount of pot-room. On the other hand, I must not be understood to advocate starving them into flower, for no flower would sooner resent the injury than the camellia. At the same time close observation has convinced me that a medium course should be followed. My success under the system I am now endeavouring to impart to others has been considerable, and one of the most useful lessons I have learnt is not to be continually disturbing their roots. It will be found sufficient to examine them once a year, to see that the drainage is perfect, which is very necessary; and they must not be turned out of the pots and directed of a greater portion of the soil because they happen to look a bit sickly. It will only make matters worse, and it will be far better to let them stand until the season for making its new growth comes round; then a little extra care in watering, and the assistance of a gentle bottom heat, and a close, humid atmosphere, where the convenience will admit of it, until it has made its new growth, will be of immense service.—*The Gardener's Magazine*.

HOW TO PRODUCE EARLY CELERY.—Any late sowings now coming on in seed-pans must be pricked out as soon as they are as large as the head of a young radish—say having four or five leaves each. The way to prick them out is to prepare first a frame, next tread the ground hard where it is to stand. On the hard surface lay turfs, grass side downwards, and on the turfs spread three inches of quite-mature dung and fine loam, equal parts, well mixed together. On this bed plant them in rows carefully; water, put on the light, keep shaded and rather close till they begin to grow; then take the light off during the day as much as possible, taking care to put it on in case of cold rains, or snow, or frost, all of which are possible even up to the middle of May. The plants from early sowings that were potted will have to be dealt with according to the weather and other circumstances. They will soon fill their pots with roots, and when they do so—better, indeed, before they do—shift them into 60-size, with one rather flat crock only in the pot, the soil half dung and half loam, and keep them in a frame, giving plenty of air and water, and exposing them fully to sunshine. By the time they fill these pots with roots the season will be sufficiently advanced to allow of planting out, and this, like all other processes, must be done with care. The trenches should be made in the usual way, by throwing out the earth. A liberal allowance of fat manure should then be wheeled in, and the soil of the trench well chopped up with it, so that earth and manure are thoroughly blended together. It is astonishing the difference it makes to such plants as celery, cauliflower, and others that need abundance of manure, whether it is turned in anyhow, so as to lie in masses, or well chopped over and mingled with the soil. In the latter case the growth is regular and good, in the other it is irregular—a plant here abominably coarse and over-topping, the next, which is as weak as if the ground had never been manured at all. For the planting choose warm, moist weather, if possible; if this cannot be done water the trenches liberally the day previous to planting, and after planting water again and shade from mid-day sun. In the planting process the line should be put down, and the plants should be handled with as much care as if they were worth a crown each. Let them be turned out of the pots without bruising them; the ball of roots need not be disturbed, the earth must be closed upon them neatly, and while the planting goes on they must not be left lying about in the hot sun to be half rotted. Those pricked out into the bed should be dealt with in a similar manner, but of course they will not be planted out so soon. In taking them out of the bed it will be found that as they are well rooted into the turf the bed itself of be cut into squares or strips; and if these squares or strips are carried carefully to the trenches the plants may be transferred to their final places without damage to a single leaf or root-fibre, which is the proper way; the plants ought not to know—in fact, or indicate by any of their appendages—that they have been shifted.—*The Gardener's Magazine*.



MRS. CAMP'S BARGAINS.

THE soul of Mrs. Camp delighted in a bargain. To get something for nothing she hardly expected; but to get something for little or almost nothing rendered her happy for weeks thereafter, and in purchasing articles even but a trifle below the regular price her pleasure was proportionate to the few pence more or less which she had persuaded the dealer to deduct from her bill. I think auctioneers and traders in second-hand goods must have regarded her as almost a personal friend, so persistent and regular were her visits to their haunts. And it was very rare that she did not bring away with her some trophy, to be proudly exhibited as a specimen of her skill in bargaining. That it was of no earthly use to her, or any member of her family, was by no means a drawback. "Keep a thing seven years and then you'll find a use for it" was a maxim always at her tongue's end, and for the sake of proving its truth, I suppose, she persisted in filling her house with articles for which she had no use, in the faith that the prescribed period of time would find them in some way indispensable.

Apart from this failing, however, Mrs. Camp was a careful wife, solicitous respecting her husband's comfort; a kind and judicious mother, as the happy faces and carefully attired bodies of four juvenile Camps attested; a model housekeeper, and a capital cook. So that, you can see, the wheels of the Camp household moved on with tolerable ease and regularity, despite Mrs. Camp's mania for buying cheap things.

It was one cool, crisp morning in January that Mrs. Camp's eyes fell upon the announcement of a grand auction of Mr. Conant's household goods, all to be sold without reserve. Mr. Conant—who had lately absconded with a large sum of money to which legally his employers had more claim than he—had had the reputation of owning a very luxuriously

furnished house, and Mrs. Camp immediately decided that she would be present at the sale.

That evening when the little ones were safely in their beds, and Mr. and Mrs. Camp were the sole occupants of the cosy sitting-room, the lady opened the campaign.

"My dear," she said, softly.

"Well, what is it, dear?" was the gentleman's cheery response.

Mr. Camp was fond of his wife and did not consider either himself or her too old for pet names. Besides, he had had his tea and read his paper and was feeling comfortable and good-humoured.

"Could you let me have some money for to-morrow, Harry?" All Mr. Conant's beautiful furniture and carpets and everything are to be sold by auction, and, of course, will go as cheap as dirt; and—"

"Don't, Laura; the house is full of rubbish already," her husband interrupted, impatiently; "I wish you'd never go inside another auction room."

"Oh, Harry, I'm sure I never buy anything but what will come in handy some time if it don't now. But we do really need a couple of new arm-chairs, and we shan't have another such chance in a hurry this will be to get them for almost nothing."

"Well, if we really need them why don't you go to a furniture shop and buy them, and have it done with? I don't understand your fancy for having the house eternally crammed with second-hand stuff."

"But, Harry, don't you know the Conants would not be likely to have anything but the best? And any way it would do no harm just to look in as I go down town."

"Oh, well, have your own way, my dear. I know what your 'looking in' to an auction means, to my sorrow. But here's your money, and you can do as you like."

So the colloquy ended.

The next afternoon when Mr. Camp came home

to dinner his wife led him into the parlour and triumphantly exhibited to him two very elegant easy-chairs, covered with crimson damask. The gentleman admired them as a matter of course, then carelessly inquired how much she had paid for them. Mrs. Camp's bright face clouded a little as she said, half apologetically:

"I gave a little more than I expected to, but they are such beauties. Mrs. Deane bid against me, too, and I was determined she shouldn't have them. They'd look nice, to be sure, on her old, faded carpet! I had to pay nine pounds for the two."

Mr. Camp lifted his eyebrows.

"Rather expensive, weren't they?"

"Well, I don't think they were so very, considering they are such handsome chairs. I don't believe they cost less than twenty pounds when they were new."

"Tut, tut, my dear; they never cost anything like such a sum. But don't let us quarrel about two chairs. Did you see anything else worth buying?"

"Oh, such lots of things, Harry—the house was just elegant. But I didn't buy anything else there except a couple of vases for the sitting-room mantel. They were so cheap and pretty I couldn't help it. Then I went down to Madame L'Heureux's to see about my new bonnet, and coming home I saw some blankets in Bruce's window, marked down to almost nothing, so I went in to look at them and they were really very good for the prices—coloured to be sure, but I thought they would do nicely for Margaret's bed, so I bought a pair of them, and Margaret is going to put them on her bed to-morrow morning. She rather turned up her nose at them, because they were gray instead of white, I suppose; but I told her there were plenty of poor people who would be glad to get coloured blankets, and I thought they'd do for her."

"I don't blame Margaret," said Mr. Camp, with a little annoyance in his tones; "gray blankets always look dirty to me, and I don't know why an old servant like Maggie shouldn't have white ones, if she prefers them, as long as, if I'm not mistaken, there's almost sufficient for a regiment in the house already. I shouldn't have thought you'd have bought any more blankets, Laura, and at Bruce's, too—a dirty, second-hand shop. You don't know where his goods may come from, nor what sort of people may have used them before you."

"Oh, I'll risk all that," was Mrs. Camp's careless answer, "and, as for the blankets, I didn't really need them, but they were so cheap, and they're just as good for Margaret's use as my nice white ones, and I can save those for some special occasion. Blankets won't spoil, and, you know, 'if you keep a thing seven years you'll find a use for it.'

"I ought to know it by this time," was the laughing response, "for you've told me so often enough. The only trouble is, if you keep on filling up the house we shan't have any room to keep things over night even, let alone for any longer period."

Mr. Camp sauntered off down town again. For a fortnight or so everything moved on quietly in the Camp household.

There happened to be no auctions in the neighbourhood, and Mrs. Camp was too busy sewing to have any time to run round to second-hand shops, so that for a little while the demon of bargains seemed to have lost his sway over the mistress of the house.

Then one evening Mrs. Camp met her husband at the door with an alarmed face.

"Margaret is very ill, Harry, and I've been waiting for you so impatiently to go for the doctor. I'm afraid she's going to have a fever."

"I'll go right off now, Laura," was Mr. Camp's quick response. "You'd better keep the children away from her till we know what is the matter."

"I have—all but Ada—who is sitting with her now. I'll call her down, though, if you think best."

"I think I would," replied her husband. "It isn't wise to run any risk with the little ones."

But Ada, a pretty, lady-like girl of eleven or twelve, begged so hard to stay with her old nurse that her mother, telling herself that the harm, if harm there was, had already been done, had no heart to refuse.

Margaret had lived with them so long that she seemed almost more like an old and trusted friend than a servant. So the doctor came and found them both there by her bedside—mother and daughter.

The old family physician's face looked grave with his first glance at Margaret's flushed countenance, and he sent father and child into the next room while he made an examination of his patient. When it was ended his face was graver still. He beckoned Mrs. Camp also into the adjoining room. Mr. Camp was there alone.

"Where is Ada?" was the doctor's first question.

"Gone down to give the little ones their supper, I

believe," was Mr. Camp's careless answer. "How is Mar—"

The doctor sprang forward to the door before he could finish his sentence.

"Ada, Ada, come here at once! Were you mad that you let that girl go down to the children, carrying contagion in the very atmosphere about her?"

"Contagion?" gasped husband and wife in one breath. "Surely, doctor—"

But the doctor was questioning Ada, who had come running upstairs half frightened at the physician's peremptory recall.

"How far downstairs had you got?" he said.

"Only down the first flight, sir," was the quiet answer.

"Had seen none of the children?"

"No, sir."

"That is well, my dear. Now go and sit by the window. I want to talk with your father and mother a moment."

Somewhat puzzled, the child did as she was bidden, and the doctor turned to her parents.

"Of course you have been vaccinated—and your children?"

The faces of his listeners turned pale.

"Doctor—you don't mean to say that Margaret—"

Mrs. Camp broke down utterly.

"That Margaret has varioloid? Yes. Nothing worse. You had better know it at once, that you may take precautions accordingly. For you two, and poor little Ada, yonder, there is nothing to be done beyond taking proper care of yourself, as you have already been exposed to the infection. But the little ones must be sent away. I will attend to that for you. Mind, now, you are not to be worried. I will take Miss Ada home with me, and with the precautions I shall take I trust she may escape it yet. But I cannot tell. I will send a nurse here for Margaret, and if you both will follow my directions closely I think I can prevent a very serious attack, if you should take it. Of course it is possible you may not have it at all. But if you should there is nothing so terrible. I should dread typhoid or scarlet fever much more. But you have not told me if you had been vaccinated?"

"Yes; we have all been vaccinated, children and all," said Mrs. Camp. "But I don't understand where Margaret could have been exposed to the disease. She has been out very little this winter, and I am sure nowhere where she could have been exposed to the small pox."

"It's a puzzle to me also. I hadn't heard of a case in the town. But the contagion can be carried in the air, in second-hand clothes, or in many other ways." In second-hand clothes! Somehow the words struck Mrs. Camp unpleasantly. Surely those blankets—but no, what nonsense was she thinking? If it was nonsense her husband's mind was full of it too, for as she looked up his eyes met hers, and he spoke his thought.

"Those blankets we bought the other day at Bruce's!"

"We" bought. How grateful his wife was for the tenderness of heart that shrank from according to her, in such a time as this, the blame she really deserved.

The doctor's quick ear caught the words. "Blankets?—at Bruce's? That's the way the infection came. I should have thought any sane man would have been wiser. Why, the fellow would buy the shirt off a man who had died of fever, if he thought he could make anything on it. Here, I'll leave some medicine for Margaret, then I must see to this. That rascal will have an epidemic of small pox in town if he isn't stopped. As it is, nobody knows how far the mischief has gone." And the old physician hurried away.

None of Mrs. Camp's children took the terrible disease. The precautions taken for their safety were quite successful, and she and her husband escaped with but light attacks.

Neither did the disease spread throughout the town to any extent. Old Doctor Gleason looked out for that, and, thanks to his energetic efforts, Bruce's cheap shop became a thing of the past. Margaret recovered, at last, though her illness was longer and more severe than varioloid generally causes.

Not many months ago Mrs. Camp took up her parlour carpet for the spring cleaning, and found in it, in the position wherein her two carefully prized easy-chairs had sat, a vast quantity of tiny holes. Her housewife knowledge told her what had caused them. Moths! and the easy-chairs were swarming with them! They were given to the flames. And I think if Mrs. Camp had not been so thoroughly cured before of her bargaining propensity this last stroke of fate would have done the work. J. A. A.

BUSINESS IN PARIS.—The *Moniteur Universel*, one of the best-informed journals of Paris, says that it

has instituted an inquiry on the commerce and most of the industries of Paris, and the result shows that the situation is at the present moment, as good as it was during the best epoch of the Empire. Land property has certainly been seriously deteriorated, and this has had an effect on sales, but business is so lively that, in spite of that, its extension becomes greater every day. Those who doubt this view of the state of affairs are invited to visit the Quartiers Saintier and Poissonnière, where nearly all the great commission agents live, and they will find that the packers there are employing a considerable number of workmen. The trade in paper boxes, which furnishes an excellent indication, is also said to be very busy—so much so that the makers of those pretty, decorated boxes in which delicate French wares are put up are working overtime. These two trades of packers and carton makers are especially cited because they are indispensable agents of commerce for exportation. It is well known that robes, bonnets, silks, ribbons, gloves, and nearly every article of French export is put up in its own special kind of pasteboard case, sometimes plain, but often very tastefully ornamented.

CARROL'S PICNIC.

YOUNG CARROL R.—, the son of a wealthy and ingenious lock and key maker, one fine day discovered, much to his uneasiness, that he was in love.

It came upon him like a flash of lightning as he was standing in the doorway of his father's shop carefully examining a very curious and intricate lock, which had been put into his hands by a wealthy customer for repair. It puzzled him exceedingly, and he brought all his wits to bear upon it. He thought over all the great and fundamental principles of the locksmith's art, and while thus employed in cogitating, with the mass of iron still in his hand, he naturally looked upwards.

That look sealed his fate. Before him was a tall, old-fashioned house, occupied by a family who kept lodgers in the two upper storeys. Carroll happened to glance at one of the windows highest up, and he beheld a merry, laughing girl's face looking down at him. Upon the window-sill there were flower-pots and vines, and amid them rested this engaging countenance.

"Good morning!" it cried, in a singing voice, "have you seen Rufus to-day?"

The face looked mischievous.

"Good morning!" cried Carroll, in response. "No, I haven't seen Rufus. I don't have charge of him."

The merry girl burst into a gay laugh at the asperity of the last sentence, and seemed to take delight in it.

"Now don't be cross; don't look like a bear. Don't you want a flower?" she asked.

"Yes," said Carroll, "I should like a flower."

He softened in an instant, and became a lamb. He walked across the court with his lock in his hand and his apron on, and chatted with the pretty girl, while she showered upon him such glances and smiles that he felt the ground slipping away beneath him. He felt that his inclination to be a bachelor grew less and less.

Ten minutes of this occupation and the business was done. He went back to his shop infected with the poison—or, rather, he recognized the fact that he was already impregnated with it.

All that day he worked like a steam-engine; he felt indefinitely that he was labouring for Alice. This was the name of the pretty hat-seller. Then, like a dismal cloud upon his sky there arose the vision of Rufus. He began to ask himself if she had not showed some affection for him also. Carroll put down his tools and commenced to look black. He counted over the times she had given his rival little marks of favour that he would have liked himself. Then, on the other hand, it seemed clear as noonday that any girl would fancy a sober, steady, and not altogether ugly fellow (here Carroll straightened up), instead of a rather careless dog-like Rufus. But Carroll then reflected on the precarious character of woman's fancy, and plunged himself back into doubt again.

His eye fell upon the lock he was endeavouring to repair. It belonged to a door in a very ancient building two or three miles in the country. The house was unoccupied, but its owner was busy repairing it, and had commissioned Carroll's father to replenish the iron work. Suddenly it occurred to the young man it would be a good place for a picnic.

In imagination he coupled himself with Alice, roaming about until they should reach some quiet nook where he would—

Somebody was passing by who threw a pebble at his window. He looked up, and beheld Rufus and Alice walking out together, busy laughing and talking, and looking at him.

They disappeared, and he grew furiously jealous. He threw down his work and took off his apron. His first impulse was to follow them, but, fortunately, his manliness came to his rescue and kept him in hand. But, instead of baulking him, this little incident made him more eager. He was now more determined than ever to have the little picnic; he made up his mind that he would achieve his object, Rufus notwithstanding. But, still, Rufus must go to the picnic. Certainly, it would not be pleasant for two, and besides, Alice had too great a sense of respect for herself to permit any such arrangement.

Still, Carroll felt that he must keep off his black face. It would not do to go and demand that Alice should go on a pleasure excursion, for he felt that he would be lucky to get her at any rate; and as she possessed a tolerable temper, and a sensible mother, he knew that only a pleasant face and a gracious manner would achieve his object.

So he considered a plan and fixed on a day, and on that very evening he went with an amiable appearance and proposed the picnic.

Alice flew into ecstasies at once. She clasped her pretty hands and declared her delight. But her prudent mother asked a few questions.

"Oh, it is only three miles out of town," responded Carroll; "we can walk easily, or, at least, ride only a part of the way. The house is very old and patched, and very picturesque. It is in the midst of a wood, and you go to it by way of a long drive. I am going to ask Rufus, and—"

"Are you going to ask him?" said Alice, with a direct look and a significant and half-reproachful emphasis on the "are."

"Yes," replied Carroll, savagely, delighted to inflict a little of the pain he had felt, "I shall ask Rufus, he is such good company, and I will get him to bring his sister. She is rather pretty, I think."

"So, so," thought shrewd Miss Alice, "you are trying to make me jealous, are you? We shall see, we shall see."

Carroll went home intoxicated with delight. He had accomplished two very fair strokes. He had awakened the green-eyed monster in his sweetheart, and had got her to go to a spot which was at once romantic and favourable to his object. He determined he would come back a happy man.

How often do such vows come to grief! Or, at least, what vicissitudes often occur before their purposes are achieved. The day of the picnic was a beautiful one, favoured with a bright sun, a southern breeze, and a clear sky.

The four young people went out with gay hearts, and strolled along, now stopping here and there, and now walking gravely on. There were birds and flowers and sunny landscapes. They ran about like children, and fought fierce hay fights with all the vigour of gipsy boys. The three miles were short ones. They came to the great, rusty iron gates, and all four had a hard fight to get them open.

They went up the weedy path, full of wonder at its length and beauty. But the grand old house, now desolate and deserted, filled them with admiration.

They did not care to laugh when they got inside of it. It was too heavy, too dark, too solemn.

This would not do for them; they merely glanced up the broad, black staircase and peered in at the damp rooms, then rushed out into the sunlight again.

But Carroll had never relinquished his design of getting Alice apart from the other two. He was bright enough to see that the time for such a plan was the twilight, and he patiently waited, though he by no means lost an opportunity of showing to Alice the drift of his thoughts. But she seemed altogether blind to it, and began to show great affection for Rufus. She would follow him with her eyes, listen to his smallest word, and laughed heartily at his jokes and bright sayings. She by these means attracted Rufus's sister, and poor and desperate Carroll commenced to find himself treated rather coldly.

In vain did he remember Alice had once, and only an hour before, returned the pressure of his hand; it went for naught before this too-evident regard for his rival, and he grew savage—that is, inwardly outwardly he was as pleasant as ever, and as merry. He was too proud to show his anger, so he cherished it secretly.

They had a lunch upon the lawn, and it should have been the gayest feast; but, alas! it was but a barren show.

Moreover the wind had changed, and a sudden troop of threatening clouds gathered over the sky. They all perceived it at once. They started up.

"It is too late to get back before the rain will fall," cried Carroll. "We had better go inside the house and wait until the shower passes."

They all agreed. He turned to help Alice. She coquettishly turned and put her hand upon his rival's arm.

He then, with a smile, offered his arm to Rufus's

sister, but that spirited young person manifested a disposition to take care of herself. Thus they entered the house. Carrol, made desperate by his alternate encouragements and rebuffs, finally gave up throwing grass, and considered where he might find some stones.

They were in the second storey of the gloomy house, and upon the darkest side. They had strolled into a great and lofty room, from which there seemed to lead a vast number of passages. They stood by one of the long windows, and looked out at the storm-beaten forest.

Said Carrol to himself:

"I don't care for her if she does not love me, but that is a question I must get an answer to before we go home. Does she or does she not? I have dallied now for a year. Let me see if I can bring her to show what she really means."

The storm grew louder and louder. The rain beat fiercely upon the panes, and clouds of mist arose and the thunder rolled. The old house shook.

The two girls began to show signs of fear. But Rufus and Carrol reassured them. The lightning grew fiercer and bolder, and the wind arose and howled through the trees and over the chimneys. Alice felt that she would like to hold some one's arm. She again put her head into Rufus's. Then she timidly looked about for Carrol. She expected to find him watching her. He had gone. She uttered an exclamation.

"He told me he was going to find a way to the top of the house," said the sister.

"Told you?" whispered Alice, with a slight force on the last word.

She dropped Rufus's arm and began to feel lonely.

Five minutes passed, then ten, then fifteen. They began to be a little timid and to call Carrol's name. Suddenly he appeared, coming slowly towards them, looking at the various shadowy doors as he passed.

"I am going into this closet," he said, loudly, for the tempest almost drowned his voice. "It looks as though there might be some curiosities stowed away in it. There is a curious lock on the door, Rufus."

He disappeared, and the huge, thick door immediately followed him.

Alice gave a scream and darted forward to stop it. It moved too quickly. It passed her, and shut to with a metallic clang. She frantically rushed at it, and seized the bolt. It went round and round in her hands.

The lock was a spring one. She pulled at the door. It was thick and very heavy. She could not even shake it.

She turned about with a pale face. Her eyes burned, and she trembled from head to foot.

"Come here, Rufus; come here, Mary. I cannot stir it. It is made of mahogany, and it fits tight. He—will suffocate. Carroll! Carroll!"

She threw herself on the floor, and called at the top of her voice,

A muffled answer came back. It was unintelligible.

"Good Heaven! Rufus, what shall we do?" She clasped her hands and violently rushed upon the door, and tried to tear it open with her fingers. "Carroll! Carroll!"

Rufus hurriedly examined it. It seemed to be closely fitted on all sides. One could not have thrust a knife-blade through the crevices either at the top or at the bottom. He struck several blows on the panels. They sounded solid and thick. He thought the only way would be to batter the panels in.

There was nothing in the room strong enough. There was a moment of irresolution, and from the closet there came the sound of blows and stifled calls. Rufus leaped out of the room, and down the stairs.

Alice again flew to the door, and with her lips pressed close against it she poured forth the most piteous cries.

"Oh, Carroll! Carroll, be brave, be brave! Oh, Mary! can he live in there, can he? Is there no chance for air? There must be, there must be, somewhere! Oh, Carroll! dear Carroll!"

She ran this way and that, now stepping to listen, and now running on again wringing her hands.

Now and then there came more dull blows upon the door, and at these times the poor, distracted girl would stop and hasten towards it, uttering the most sorrowful words.

"Oh, Carroll; what should I do if you died? Be brave, be brave, Carroll! Rufus will break it in. He is coming!"

Rufus disappear, dragging after him a thick piece of joist.

Alice renewed her appeals, beating the door with her hands. Tears burst from her eyes; and there was no longer any coqueting. She implored Carroll

to hold out a little longer, then she would be with him.

Carrol appeared suddenly at another door, and looked at them. He could hardly forbear coming forward. But half proud and half sorry at the tempest he had caused, he hurried back to his pretended closet, and after a single blow had been struck he fumbled about and found the bolt. He turned it, and with admirable skill sank down faint and exhausted.

Alice rushed in with a cry of joy, and caught him in her arms, and tried to arouse him with every endearment she could speak. No expression of affection did she spare, and nobly did the desperate villain keep his countenance. Had he allowed a smile to cross his stolid face, or had he permitted an eye to open, his fate would have been sealed.

After much difficulty they aroused him, and they brought a carriage and carried him home. He said he could not bear the light of day, but it was a delicious ride on the back seat, and it was all arranged between the two before they had accomplished the first mile.

B. F.

JASPER AND BLOODSTONE.

JASPER, one of the many varieties of quartz, is very compact, and is found of various colours—dark green, red, brown, yellow, grayish, and sometimes bluish and black. It is very hard, and takes a fine polish. Occasionally it is found banded, or in stripes of different colours, when it is termed ribbon-jasper; the stripes are usually red and green alternating. Jasper alone is infusible before the blow-pipe, but it will melt with the addition of carbonate of soda. It is sometimes found imbedded in trap rock, but more frequently in pebbles in the beds of rivers.

The yellow jasper is found near the Bay of Smyrna, in Greece, and other places; the red in the plains of Argos; the variety known as ribbon-jasper comes from Siberia and Saxony; and another kind, termed Egyptian jasper, is found on the banks of the Nile. This latter is of a fine brown on the exterior, and clouded with brown of various shades, frequently spotted with black, the markings in this variety occasionally resembling natural objects. A specimen in the British Museum is thought to exhibit a likeness of the poet Chaucer. The yellow variety is used in Florentine mosaic work called pietra dura. The ancients were well acquainted with this stone, and prized it most highly. Onomakritos, 500 years before the Christian era, speaks of the "grass-green jasper, which rejoices the eye of man, and is looked on with pleasure by the immortals."

The emeralds spoken of by Roman and Greek authors were most probably green jasper, as we hear of pillars of temples cut out of one piece. Pliny, who describes no less than ten kinds of jasper, relates that it was worn by the natives of the East as an amulet, or charm.

This stone was much used for cameos; many specimens are extant, having several layers, and the objects represented are cut deep or shallow, so as to bring the colours into contrast; for instance, in some specimens may be seen the head of a warrior in red jasper, the helmet green, and the breastplate yellow. In the collection of the Vatican are two marvellous vases of this substance, one of red jasper with white stripes, the other of black jasper with yellow stripes. This stone is cut on copper wheels, with fine sand and emery, and polished on wooden or metal wheels with pumice and Tripoli.

The jasper, according to the Authorized Version of the Scriptures, was the twelfth stone in the breastplate of the High Priest; and as the Hebrew name is "yashpeh," which is strikingly similar to jasper, and almost all the translations agree, there can be little doubt as to its identity. Galen, among other sage advice, relates that if a jasper be hung about the neck it will strengthen the stomach.

The bloodstone is another jasper variety of quartz, of a dark green colour, and having those minute blood-red specks disseminated throughout which give it its name. The word heliotrope, from *elios*, the sun, and *trope*, a turning, is derived from the notion that when immersed in water it changes the image of the sun into blood-red. Pliny relates that the sun could be viewed in it as in a mirror, and that it made visible its eclipses. It is found in large quantities in India, Bokhara, Siberia, and Tartary, and also in the Isle of Rum in the Hebrides, occurring generally in masses of considerable size. It is translucent and susceptible of a beautiful polish; its commercial value, as in the case of other stones, varies with quality of the specimen. The bloodstone is used for the same purposes as agate and onyx. There is a tradition that at the Crucifixion the blood which followed the spear-thrust fell upon a dark green jasper lying at the foot of the cross, and from this circumstance sprang the variety. In the Middle Ages the red specks alleged to be supposed to represent the blood of Christ; and this stone was thought to possess

the same medicinal and magical virtues as the jasper.

FACETIA.

ANNUAL flowering plants are said to resemble whales, because they come up to blow.

BUSINESS IS BUSINESS.—"How much farther shall this exorcinating uncertainty go, my beloved?" "To father," was the blushing reply.

It is said that the reason why the Russian Government is so slow in availing itself of the electric telegraph is that it is opposed to some of the necessary preliminary operations—such as *elevating the Poles*, for instance.

"Boy," asked the teacher of an infant Sunday school class, "did you ever see an elephant's skin?" "Yes, sir, I did," piped a little fellow away down at the foot. "Did you, Robert? Where was it?" "On an elephant, sir."

EARLY FIFTY.

Aunt: "Ah, Willie! if you wish to do well you should be good and pious."

Willie: "Well, auntie, if you'd make pie as good as ma used, you'd see how well I'd do!"—*Punch*.

NO ACCOUNTING FOR TASTE.

Old Dame: "Now, Jemima, if you wash up your dishes, make the room tidy, get through your work early, and are a very good girl, perhaps as a treat I'll let you go and see old Butcher Briskett buried this afternoon."—*Punch*.

ONE OF THE "SYMPATHIZERS."

James: "I'm afraid, my lady, I'll require to leave you."

Lady: "Why?"

James: "Well, my lady, I can't agree with master's nastiness, against that poor, persecuted Sir Roger."—*Punch*.

A WOMAN WILL TURN.

Miss Crampe (*Governess of the Squire's, who plays the Organ at Church, and coaches up the Choir*): "Mr. Jorkins, you always take up that 'lead' in the anthers so dreadfully flat!"

Mr. Jorkins (*with a Modesty rare in a Teacher*): "Well, we dew, miss; but—you see Mr. Maugles and me ain't Sims-Reeves, miss!"—*Punch*.

AN OLD YOUNG GENTLEMAN.—"I owe you one," said a frosty old bachelor to a lady the other night at a party. "For what?" said she. "Why, for calling me a gentleman." "If I did so," was the rather ill-natured reply, "I beg you will not regard it as a compliment, for, though an old man, you may still be a young gentleman."

THE ADVICE OF EXPERIENCE.—A blacksmith brought up his son—to whom he was very severe—to his trade. One day the old man was trying to harden a cold chisel, which he had made of foreign steel, but he could not succeed. "Horsewhip it, father!" exclaimed the young one. "If that won't harden it I don't know what will!"

MAN THE LIFEBOAT.

Peter Reid, Esq., of the Stock Exchange, has presented one hundred and fifty pounds to the National Lifeboat Institution, having already presented two lifeboats to that society. Let other stockbrokers take the hint, and so ensure a floating capital of the best kind.—*Punch*.

IN FOR A PENNY, IN FOR A POUND.

Jane: "Save my Jem! you must be wrong."

Mary: "Well, you may say what you like, I only wish I had as many sovereigns—"

Jane: "Well—"

Mary: (*solemnly*) "As many sovereigns as I'm sure of that!"—*Punch*.

EXEMPLI GRATIA.

Ancient Mariner (*to credulous Yachtsman*): A'miral Lord Nelson! Bless yer, I known him; served under him. Many's the time I've as'd him for a bit o' bacon, as I might be a astin' o' you; and says he, 'well, I ain't got no bacon,' jest as you might say to me; 'but he's a shilling for yer,' says he!"—*Punch*.

A WIDE AWAKE TRAVELLER.—A man stopping at an hotel in Richmond, Va., lately, caused no little trouble by the reprehensible habit of walking about at all hours of the night. Having established the reputation of a first-class commando, he walked off to an early train with his carpet-bag as naturally as though he had been awake, and left his bill unpaid.

A BONE-US.

Our excellent contemporary, the *Builder*, contains an advertisement which compared with the sensational tales as a rule, may be described as several storeys high:

Two skeletons in Hampshire, 20 miles beyond Southampton, are required to be immediately completed. At first we were inclined to think that the services of an able anatomist were required by some modern Frankenstein; but our own residence—we live in a modern villa—soon reminded us of the fact that un-

finished houses are often spoken of as skeletons, and that many of them retain their claim to that title even after they are supposed to be finished, for the wind blows through them as if they were mere bony structures.—*Fus.*

FINDING A VERDICT.—In one of the earliest trials before a coloured jury in Texas twelve gentlemen of colour were told by the judge to retire and "find a verdict." They went to the jury-room. The sheriffs and others standing outside heard the opening and shutting of drawers, the slamming of doors, and other sounds of unusual commotion. At last the jury came back into court, when the foreman rose and said: "We have looked everywhere in the drawers and behind the door, and can't find no verdict." It wasn't in the room."

"**FOLLOWING COPY.**"—Scrooge sent an order by telegraph for his wedding cards, adding to his name, and the name of her who was to make him happy, and the favoured spot; and the fortunate day of the blessed month, the letters "C. O. D." (cash on delivery), to give assurance of immediate liquidation. Fancy the feelings of himself and of her who was to be "his very own," on receiving the cards at the latest possible moment with the letters "C. O. D." in the corner of every one of them.

WHAT IS THE UPSET PRICE?—The following from a London daily paper is a curious advertisement:

Shed Milk for Sale. Delivered anywhere West—Appy., etc.
There is a richness and freshness about this rare indeed with London milk, that should command a ready market. In advertising the dairymen probably had in remembrance a familiar proverb, bidding him never "cry" over it.—*Fun.*

GENTLE OVERTURES TOWARDS FRIENDSHIP.

First Stranger: "I declare, sir, that women are getting more outrageously decolte every day. Just look over there at that prodigious old porpoise with the eyeglass!"

Second Stranger: "Hun! Ha! Yes! I can't help thinking she's a more festive-looking object than that funeral old frump with the fan!"

First Stranger: "That funeral old frump is my wife, sir!"

Second Stranger: "The prodigious old porpoise is mine! Let's go and have some tea!"—*Punch.*

AN EXCUSE FOR ANY FOOLS.—Suppose a lot of people were to parade the streets preceded by a band of music, and bearing flags and banners, and shouting and cheering noisily as they marched along—would not people say they were drunk? No; for they know that teetotalers are accustomed to make demonstrations of that frantic description. But what if drunken rabbles took to doing the same, calling themselves Bacchanals? Would the police have orders to interfere with them? Of course not. Interfere with the worship of Bacchus! That would be infringing religious liberty, and insulting the sacred feelings of our fellow-subjects.—*Punch.*

A TIMELY PUN.—A good joke is told of a little four-year-old fellow who, having disobeyed his father, was about to incur the penalty—a switching. The father deliberately prepared a rod, while his son stood a sad and silent spectator. As the parent approached the unpleasant duty the boy started at a brisk run towards a neighbouring hill. The father pursued, and for a time the youngster increased the distance between them; but gradually his strength began to fail, and when he reached the hill and began to ascend he soon lost his vantage ground. Nearer and nearer the irate father approached, and just as the top of the hill was reached, and as he came within arm's length of the little fugitive, who was ready to fall from exhaustion, the boy quickly turned about, dropped upon the ground, and, with an indescribable cast of countenance, exclaimed, "Papa, that makes a fellow—blow—don't it?" This "changing of the subject" was so extremely ludicrous that the father laughed heartily over the strategy which his hopeful son exhibited, and the rod was not used.

THE WORD FOR WOMEN.

Why, they don't want any, and they shan't have any. That is nearly as much as can, with reason and justice, be said against the proposal to give women votes. It is too true that, as a body, they don't want any. By far the greater number of men in possession of the franchise are such as those who instantly assemble round a cab-horse gone down in the street, and stand staring at it on the pavement, where they obstruct the wise. The women who stop and stare are comparatively few. Hence it may be inferred that women in general are not more empty-headed than men. But were they ever so stupid and foolish, the votes of a majority of female electors would neutralize those of the majority of the opposite sex, and how very desirable that would be.

If women wanted the franchise they might have it. There would be no need for them to hold meetings in Hyde Park, so as to annoy the upper classes

and intimidate the Government. They could get themselves enfranchised by holding up a finger, or without even so much as that. Three words would do it. "Enfranchise us, or—"

Suppose, for example, that the women all agreed to say to every Member of Parliament, or other man who opposed their claims to political emancipation, "I tell you what. Unless you promise, on your honour, to vote in the House and on the hustings for female suffrage, I won't dance with you." Does any man imagine that if the ladies, all or the greater part of them, were to say that, and stick to it, another Session would pass away before the concession of entire justice to women?

"Did we say three words would emancipate woman-kind?" One word would—a monosyllable. They might refuse, also, to sew on buttons; in short, might strike altogether. Women could obtain all their rights, and a great deal more, if they would only make up their minds to say "No!"—*Punch.*

BE GOOD TO YOURSELF.

"GOOD-BYE! good-bye!" the driver said

As the coach went off in a whirl,
And the coachman bowed his handsome
head;

"Be good to yourself—my girl!"

Ah! many a fond good-bye I've heard
From many an aching heart,
And many a friendly farewell word,
When strangers came to part;

And I've heard a thousand merry quips,
And many a senseless joke,
And many a fervent prayer from lips
That all a-tremble spoke;

And many a bit of good advice
In smooth proverbial phrase;
And many a wish—of little price—
For health and happy days;

But, musing how the human soul
(Whate'er the Fates may will)
Still measures by its self-control
Its greatest good or ill,

Of benedictions, I protest,
Mid many a shining pearl,
I like the merry coachman's best—
"Be good to yourself—my girl!"

J. G. S.

GEMS.

THERE is nothing honourable that is not innocent, and nothing mean but what attaches guilt.

You will not sugar a man so much by showing him that you hate him as by expressing a contempt of him.

IT is the energy of will that is the soul of the intellect; wherever it is, there is life; where it is not all is dulness, and despondency, and desolation.

IT life is miserable, 'tis painful to live; if happy, 'tis terrible to die; both come to the same thing. The death which prevents dotage comes more scarcely than that which ends it.

WHEN the heart is full of longing for the dead ones it is but another mode of continuing to love them, and we shed tears as well when we think of their departure as when we picture to ourselves our joyful reunion—and the tears, perchance, differ not.

BEWARE OF INGRATITUDE.—Insult not misery, neither deride infirmity, nor ridicule deformity; the first shows inhumanity, the second folly, and the third pride. He that made him miserable made them happy to lament him; He that made him weak made them strong to support him. Do not show thy ingratitude to thy great Creator by despising any of His creatures.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

CLEANING OLD ENGRAVINGS.—Instead of carbamate of soda use the bicarbonate, in slight excess, for decomposing chlorides of lime. The reaction is very violent, and Javelle water is easily separated from the precipitate produced. Old engravings, woodcuts, and all kinds of printed matter that have turned yellow, are completely restored by being immersed in it for only one minute, without the least injury to the paper, if the precaution is taken to thoroughly wash the article in water containing a little hyposulphite of soda. Undyed linen and cotton goods of all kinds, however soiled or dirty, are rendered snowy white in a very short time by merely placing them in the liquid mentioned. For the preparation of Javelle water take four pounds of bicarbonate of soda, one pound of chloride of lime; put the soda into a kettle over the fire, add one gallon of

boiling water, let it boil from ten to fifteen minutes, then stir in the chloride of lime, avoiding lumps. When cold the liquid can be kept in a jug ready.

STATISTICS.

SHIPBUILDING IN 1871.—A Parliamentary return, recently issued as to the ships completed and under construction in the United Kingdom in 1871 shows the extent of the change which is taking place in the character of the ships used in the shipping trade. Out of a total of 1,022 ships completed in that year with an aggregate tonnage of 391,058 tons the number of sailing vessels was 485, and the tonnage 60,260 tons; while the number of steamers was 537, with a tonnage of 330,798 tons. The tonnage of the steamers built, therefore, was five-sixths of the whole; and, as steamers are much more efficient than sailing vessels, the trade to be accommodated by steamers as compared with sailing ships will at least be in the proportion of eleven-twelfths to one-twelfth. At this rate sailing vessels will soon only retain the most insignificant portion of the trade of the world. The figures as to the ships left under construction on the 31st of December tell the same tale. There were 710 ships, the tonnage of which had been ascertained, amounting to 427,658 tons, and of these 272 were sailing ships with a tonnage of 46,762 tons and 438 steamers with a tonnage of 380,896 tons, the proportions of tonnage being—steamers eight-ninths, and sailing ships one-ninth. The return also shows the progress of the change from wood to iron, as well as from sail to steam. The following are the respective proportions of iron, wood, and composite vessels in the above totals: Ships built in 1871—iron, 510, tonnage, 847,374; wood, 602, 41,699 tons; composite, 10, 1,985 tons; total, 1,022 vessels, 391,058 tons. Ships under construction on 31st December, 1871—iron, 444, tonnage, 394,373; wood, 265, 33,185 tons; composite, 1, 100 tons; total, 710 vessels, 427,658 tons.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A CELEBRATED clergyman recently said that he had found more good in bad people, and more bad in good people than he ever expected to.

The Prince of Wales holds rank in the Army, the Duke of Edinburgh in the Navy, Prince Arthur in the Engineers, and now Prince Leopold is going to join the Volunteers.

This disestablished Irish Church has substituted the words "our Sovereign Lady the Queen" for "our most religious and gracious Queen" in the prayer for Parliament.

The Court of Appeal of Cassel has just pronounced a divorce between Prince William of Hesse-Philipsthal and Princess Marie of Hanau, youngest daughter of the Elector of Hesse.

A NEW YORK wedding cake weighed 40 pounds. It was in the form of a three-storey house, with sugar bride and groom coming out of the front door.

MIND.—Josh Billings says there seems to be four styles of mind. 1st. Them who knows it's so. 2nd. Them who knows it ain't so. 3rd. Them who split the difference, and guess at it. 4th. Them who don't care which way it is.

THE LOOSHAI EXPEDITION.—The little girl who was carried off by the Looshai tribe in India, and who was recently recovered by the force fitted out by the Indian Government, and known as the "Looshai Expedition," has arrived in Glasgow from Liverpool, on her way to Elgin, where she is to reside in future with her grandparents.

PROPOSED SUBMARINE TUNNEL.—It is proposed to tunnel under the Strait of Canso, between Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, in order to connect the railway at Cape Breton with the main land. The distance is about 24 miles. It is estimated to cost the moderate sum of 2½ millions of dollars.

The first book printed on English paper was "Bartholomew de Glanville" (1495), translated into English by John Trevisa, printed by Wynkyn de Worde, at Westminster. The paper was made by John Tate, at Hertford, the first paper-mill having been set up there in the reign of King Henry VII.

DIAMOND OF THE MARTELLO TOWERS.—The martello towers on the coast, having in a measure been rendered useless by the more recently constructed forts and the wonderful progress made in the science of gunnery of late years, the authorities decided to destroy by gunpowder the two towers, Nos 35 and 38, situated on the coast of Sussex, near Hastings, on Thursday, the 25th ult. The experiments were made by the Royal Engineers and officers of the Ordnance Corps, and others likely to feel interested in the operations were invited to be present. The Tower No. 35 was blown up by 200 lb. of gunpowder placed in three positions, and No. 38 by 300 lb. of powder in barrels.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

EMILY W.—The packet has been received, and will be attended to.

AMY ROBERT.—The handwriting is particularly neat and nice.

A. G.—Your witicisma are much too old and somewhat flat. They are thankfully declined.

LUCY ELLEN H.—You are right. The price of the particular you mention is sixpence.

T. S., M. D.—There appears to be some confusion in the paragraph, which obtained insertion through an oversight.

S. F.—If you send an answer giving full particulars there is a great probability that it will be inserted. No charge is made.

HENRY S. N.—The handwriting appears very boyish for the age named, and the age is too young for the contemplated position.

J.—Some time will probably elapse before we shall be able to comply with your request, which however we will endeavour to do in due course.

WILLIAM P.—The lady is sure to wish to have more precise information about the looks and the circumstances than you have sent.

D. M. (Wolverhampton).—The handwriting, though good, would not be suitable for the purpose you inquire about.

JOHNSON.—We must ask you and your friend to repeat your announcements, and, on the next occasion, each should write on a separate sheet of note paper.

A. J. R.—We think that the circumstances are very exceptional which should induce a young lady of seventeen to marry or to engage herself to be married. A year or two later on would we think be time enough.

C. F. M.—The tale has been received. As to its adaptability we must crave time for the opinion; the perusal will take place in turn, but there are already a great many others waiting their turn.

LENA.—The plan you suggest is very good. Another way is to write to the last known address, placing outside the letter the words "To be opened in his absence." Further, you could advertise in the local papers.

A. B.—Your only plan seems to be to advertise in those papers which circulate in that part of the colony where in your opinion the missing person is likely to dwell. You can manage this through a London advertising agent.

A. L. S.—There are so many inconveniences necessarily attendant upon the marriage of a young man under the age of twenty-one years that you will only consult prudence by waiting until you have obtained your majority.

A. J. D.—Perhaps a non-critical reader might say that the lines are not so very bad, but yet he would point out many blunders, and decide that the verses, even if new, are too carelessly copied out to merit the consideration you desire them to receive.

W. DE VERE.—The difference between the ages of a married couple should be from five to seven years—the seniority of course being on the husband's side. Twenty-five with eighteen is considered a much better union than twenty-one with seventeen.

H. M. C.—It is not because the second verse of the tribute to your love is a very palpable imitation of a well-known old operatic song that we decline your contribution, but because your anticipations about the piece as a whole containing too many imperfections are well founded.

CONSTANT READER (Brentford).—I. John Tawell, the murderer of Sarah Hart, was hung at Aylesbury on the 28th March, 1845. 2. The penmanship is distinct but has no freedom. 3 Ordinary deal is the wood upon which the grainer's art is usually employed. Harder woods come under the hands of the polisher.

FREDY R. C.—Your effusions oscillate between a wearisome prosiness and a ludicrous phraseology, which make us sensible of great relief as we reach the last line. The most ordinary charity prompts us to save our readers a similar infliction to that we have experienced in the perusal of your "poetry."

ROBERT W.—The sketch is deficient in interest and point; there is too on the whole an improbability about the nature of the principal character as portrayed by you. A sot is usually lost to all sense of honour, and becomes a nuisance to society as well as himself. If your hero could have been capable of as much reflection, feeling, and self-denial as you attach to him he would at

least have made some better attempt to break his chains. The sketch cannot be made available, and we do not undertake to return rejected communications.

A CONSTANT SUBSCRIBER.—1. A moderate use of the fruit is wholesome, but we are not aware that it is attended with the result to which you refer. 2. About 3 ft. 4 in. He might receive the stipulated addition to his stature in the specified time if his habits remain good. 3. The bones remain about the same; of course a diminution of flesh will detract from the breadth. 4. Superstitions.

F. WISE.—Since your article of furniture is new it seems to follow that it has been recently purchased; in which case the better plan is to return it to the tradesman by whom it was supplied, and request him either to send you a decent article or refund your money. A county-court judge would probably hold that there was an implied warranty that the couch should be free from the nuisance of which you complain.

MATILDE.—We are not in the lady's secrets, and if we were we trust we should not betray them. We can only say that on the Continent there is a prevalent rumour to the effect that a number of gypsies from Spain, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, and Turkey are on their way to England to be present at the marriage of their queen, Mabel Gray. Possibly by the time you read this the marriage of the lady may be placed beyond a doubt.

A. E. G.—We do not think that "Cissy Langford" is a well-told tale. Of course we are aware of an opinion prevalent with many to the effect that "revenge is sweet." Whatever may be said on that point, it is open to question whether Cissy would not have had the greatest revenge by simply treating Gregory with that contempt and indifference which were richly his due. As the tale runs, however, the heroine lays herself open to imputations of duplicity and delight in the refinements of torture which, pardon us, are characteristics more fenish and feline than womanly. The faults of construction are also numerous.

TRUE RICHES.

Oh, give me not the shining gold,
That may drop from an heiress's hand,
Nor talk to me of her smile so cold,
Combined with her acres of land;
She may do for those of a lordly race
We read of in legends of old,
Who prefer to the wealth of a smiling face
Rich piles of the glittering gold.

But give to me a heart sincere,
And a gentle, loving smile;
Those riches to me are more dear
Than the miser's hoarded pile.
And, though no riches are mine to fly,
Still love erects her throne,
A richer and happier man am I,
For one heart is all my own.

G. W. H.

H. and CLARA (Falmouth).—I. Vauban was a distinguished French engineer under whose superintendence several fortresses in France were constructed. He was also a marshal of France. Although he died in 1707 his scientific writings are still held in esteem. 2. A youth is usually sent to college when he is a little over seventeen years of age, or as soon as he is able to pass the necessary matriculation examination. 3. The lines

"Life's a short summer—man a flower—
He dies—alas, how soon he dies!"

will be found in Dr. Johnson's Ode to Winter. 4. The penmanship is good, and suitable for any situation for which you are otherwise qualified.

LAUGHING POLLY, twenty, medium height, dark brown hair and eyes. Respondent must be tall, fond of home and a mechanic. Respondent must be tall, fond of home and children.

FANNY, twenty, good looking, brown hair and eyes, and a tradesman's daughter. Respondent must be tall, fair, and make a loving husband.

CHARLES B., twenty-five, dark hair and eyes, and cheerful. Respondent must not be tall, and not object to live in France.

Rosina, twenty, a brunette, and fond of music. Respondent must be well educated, about her own age, and loving.

MARGARET S., nineteen, good looking, accomplished, and has a little money, would like to marry a tall, dark gentleman.

JACK S., twenty-seven, tall, dark, good looking, and a printer. Respondent must be about twenty-four, and domesticated.

CARDIFFIAN, twenty-one, dark, good looking, good tempered, and with money, would like to marry a lady of good social position, fond of music, and with money.

ALICE FRENCH, twenty-one, short, rather stout, good tempered, has been in a good situation for some time, and saved a little money. Respondent must be a carpenter.

W. MACKENZIE, twenty-one, 5 ft. 5 in., dark hair and eyes, good looking, and a tradesman, wishes to marry a young lady who is good looking, affectionate, and domesticated.

HETTY, a widow with one child, twenty-three, rather tall, brown hair and eyes, loving, domesticated, and fond of home. Respondent must be tall, fair, affectionate, and domesticated.

MARY, nineteen, good tempered, dark, very beautiful, with black ringlets, and blue eyes. Respondent must be fair, good looking, fond of home, and have a good income.

EMMA B., nineteen, tall, very fair, blue eyes, golden hair, and good looking, wishes to correspond with a tall, fair gentleman with a view to matrimony; he must be loving and true.

ANY, nineteen, blue eyes, golden hair, accomplished,

has expectations and is pretty, wishes to correspond with a gentleman in a good position with a view to matrimony.

P. K. S., thirty-one, tall, dark complexion, holds a good position in the Navy, wishes to marry a young woman of thorough domesticated habits, who can cook well; money is no object.

NO CROSS NO CROWN, twenty-one, tall, fine looking, fair has good prospects. Respondent must be a young lady with dark hair and eyes, a little money, be fond of home, and have also a little experience of business.

ROSETTA, eighteen, middling height, gray eyes, dark brown hair, loving, industrious, and a domestic servant. Respondent must be a dark, steady, sober young man, about twenty-four, able to keep a wife.

HAPPY SARAH, twenty, medium height, nice looking, bright gray eyes, luxuriant brown hair, loving, domesticated, good tempered, and a domestic servant. Respondent must be dark, loving, about twenty-six, a mechanic in Liverpool and a Roman Catholic.

AMELIA B. (Derbyshire), twenty-five, 5 ft. 3 in., gray eyes, golden hair, nice looking, well educated, rather stout, fond of music and dancing, and the daughter of parents in very good circumstances. Respondent must be tall, handsome, and in an independent position.

CLARA E. S., twenty-one, medium height, fair hair, blue eyes, and domesticated, would like to marry a tall, good-looking gentleman about 5 ft. 8 in., not more than twenty-six years of age. Respondent must be very loving and able to keep a wife; a tradesman preferred.

LOUISA W., twenty-two, tall, fair, a domestic servant who has saved a little money, and who has blue eyes, light brown hair, would like to marry a dark, good-looking tradesman about thirty, who is of a loving disposition, and fond of home.

BLANCHE L would like to marry a gentleman farmer, or a banker's clerk with good prospects. "B. L." is eighteen, medium height, well connected, has auburn curling hair, a lively disposition, is musical, very domestic, and loving.

STUDDING SAIL JACK and BILL HALYARDS, two chums, belonging to the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young women with a view to matrimony. "Studding Sail Jack" is twenty-four, 5 ft. 3 in., dark complexion, blue eyes, and will make a loving husband. "Bill Halyards" is twenty-three, 5 ft. 6 in., light hair, dark blue eyes, fond of singing, and loving.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

JOVIAL HARRY is responded to by—"Alice," twenty-one, medium height, loving, and domesticated.

BILL BUNTING by—"Louie," twenty-two, dark, good looking, and thinks she is all Bill Bunting requires.

MARY LILLY by—"T. S.," tall, dark, holds a good position, and in the Royal Navy.

KITTY by—"W. L.," tall, dark, of a loving disposition, would make a good husband.

ALBERT W. by—"Emily B." eighteen, tall, good looking, a good pianist, and very ladylike.

JENNIE by—"A. O. F." 5 ft. 3 in., light hair, blue eyes, loving disposition, and in the Navy.

JESSICA by—"T. S.," twenty-two, tall, handsome, the son of an independent farmer in a good position.

LIZZY by—"Willie," twenty-four, tall, considered good looking, in the Royal Navy, would make a good husband.

MARGARET by—"Sky Scraper," twenty-seven, 5 ft. 8 in., light brown hair, blue eyes, loving, a seaman in the Royal Navy, and an Irishman of the church of Rome.

G. W. E. by—"E. F." nineteen, dark, nice looking, good tempered, and domesticated; and—"M. E. N." nineteen, tall, dark hair and eyes, fresh colour, very loving, good tempered, and domesticated.

HENRY C. by—"Angela," twenty-five, a domestic servant, dark hair and eyes, not very tall, nor pretty, but possessed of a good temper, and would make "Henry C." a loving, careful wife.

JAMES HENRY BY—"Ethel," who has kept house for her brother, she is eighteen, dark, medium height, very good looking, and in receipt of a good income.

BOWSWIR by—"Corwall," she is twenty-one, good looking, and educated, and thinks she is capable of making an artisan's home happy, provided she meets with a good husband.

BILL FIREBAL by—"Emma A." twenty-two, 5 ft. 3 in., blue eyes, affectionate, a domestic servant who is perfectly able to wash and make a shift;—"Anna," one-and-twenty, fair, of a good disposition, and capable of making a home comfortable; and—"Kitty," nineteen, medium height, slight in figure, and loving disposition.

HETTY having seen "Jovial Harry's" advertisement for a wife, would like to correspond with him with a view to matrimony, she answers the description of his requirements and would like to hear from him.

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